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THE NORMANS' NEMESIS

The rebel who defied William the Conqueror

HISTORY MAGAZINE

THE HISTORIANS' VIEW

The roots of the Afghanistan crisis

BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING HISTORY MAGAZINE
December 2021 / **www.historyextra.com**

Alexander the Great

How the ancient tyrant became a global hero

Spades, soil and sisterhood
Pioneering female archaeologists

The bloody story of Irish Partition

The Georgian people's princess

How Princess Charlotte captivated 19th-century Britain

Product of the environment

When polar ice melts, it harms habitats as far away as Asia and Africa. In 2022, conservationist (and Christopher Ward Challenger) Tom Hicks will lead an expedition to the North Pole to measure ice melt rates for the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF). On his wrist will be the C60 Anthropocene GMT. Able to monitor two time zones at once, waterproof to 600m and with a sapphire dial that recalls polar ice, it can withstand whatever the Arctic throws at it. And with five percent from the sale of each watch going to DSWF, it's playing its own part in the fight against climate change.

christopherward.com

Christopher Ward

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Unsurprisingly Swiss.

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WELCOME

DECEMBER 2021

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

"There are more worlds in the sky than anyone could count – and I have not yet conquered one of them." So said **Alexander the Great** (at least, according to the Greek author Plutarch) on discovering the true size of the universe. And while Alexander's conquests were limited in their reach, his legend was not – soaring far further than his armies ever could. As Edmund Richardson relates in this month's cover feature, Alexander's story took on a life of its own in the centuries after his death until he became **the world's first global icon**. Head to page 18 to find out more.

The outer limits of Alexander's empire included what is now **Afghanistan**, a country that has dominated the news recently following the US withdrawal and the return of the Taliban to power. We assembled **a panel of expert historians** to explore the history of the country and consider how its past has shaped its modern tribulations. You'll find that on page 27.

There's a whole lot more to get your teeth into this month as well, from the legendary **rebellions of Hereward the Wake** (page 44) to the historical challenges faced by **women in archaeology** (page 64) and the story of a **Georgian princess** whose untimely death plunged Britain into mourning. Plus, as we approach the centenary of the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty, Charles Townshend charts the key events in the run-up to the **partition of Ireland** (page 50).

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Rob Attar
Editor

THREE THINGS I'VE LEARNED THIS MONTH

1. Finn took years to finish
Huckleberry Finn was one of the books that I most enjoyed in English classes at school, but I wasn't aware at the time that it had taken Mark Twain close to a decade to complete it (page 15).

2. Archaeology led the way
In Rebecca Wragg Sykes' piece, I was intrigued to discover that, in 1939, archaeologist Dorothy Garrod became the first female Oxbridge professor in any subject (page 66).

3. Servicemen were demob happy
I was interested to learn, in our *Q&A* section, that the "demob suits" given to ex-servicemen after the Second World War, were exempt from austerity measures and so contained features unavailable in civilian clothing (page 43).

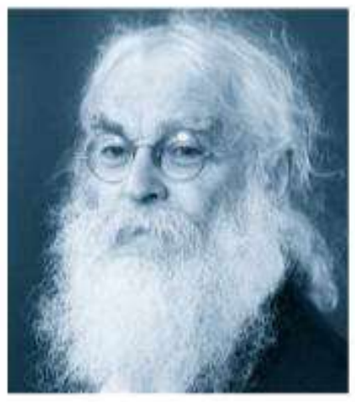
ON THE COVER: FRAGMENT FROM THE "ALEXANDER MOSAIC" SHOWING ALEXANDER THE GREAT IN BATTLE AGAINST PERSIAN KING DARIUS III, ROMAN COPY OF A HELLENISTIC PAINTING, CIRCA 1ST-3RD CENTURY AD: GETTY IMAGES. BACKGROUND: DREAMSTIME. PRINCESS CHARLOTTE: ALAMY. THIS PAGE: YEPOKA YEEBO/STEVE SAYERS/GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Rebecca Wragg Sykes
"Creating the TrowelBlazers project has been so powerful; not only discovering and sharing stories connecting past women pioneers, but also forging new networks, by working alongside the three other brilliant women co-founders."
Rebecca reveals why the 1930s was a golden age for women in archaeology on page 64

Edmund Richardson
"Two thousand years ago, the Greek historian Arrian asked: 'Why does the world need another book about Alexander?' The answer: from Iceland to Ethiopia, from antiquity to today, everyone finds a different Alexander."
Edmund explores how different cultures have portrayed the ancient conqueror on page 18

Mary Ann Lund
"Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* is both a literary masterpiece of the Renaissance, and an acute exploration into just how fragile the human mind can be."
Mary revisits Burton's masterpiece, and the condition it sought to understand on page 58



Irving Finkel
"If you're interested in the history of ghosts, which I've always been, the marvellous thing is that the oldest writing we have – cuneiform clay tablets from ancient Mesopotamia – tells us all about what people believed on this very subject."
Irving journeys through the murky Mesopotamian underworld on page 72

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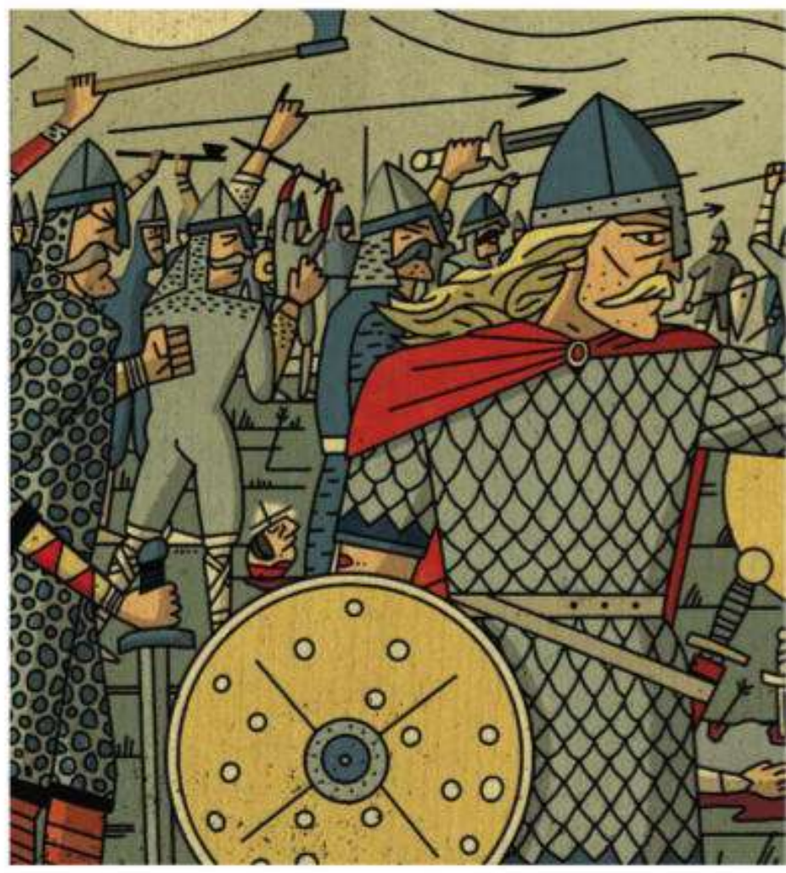
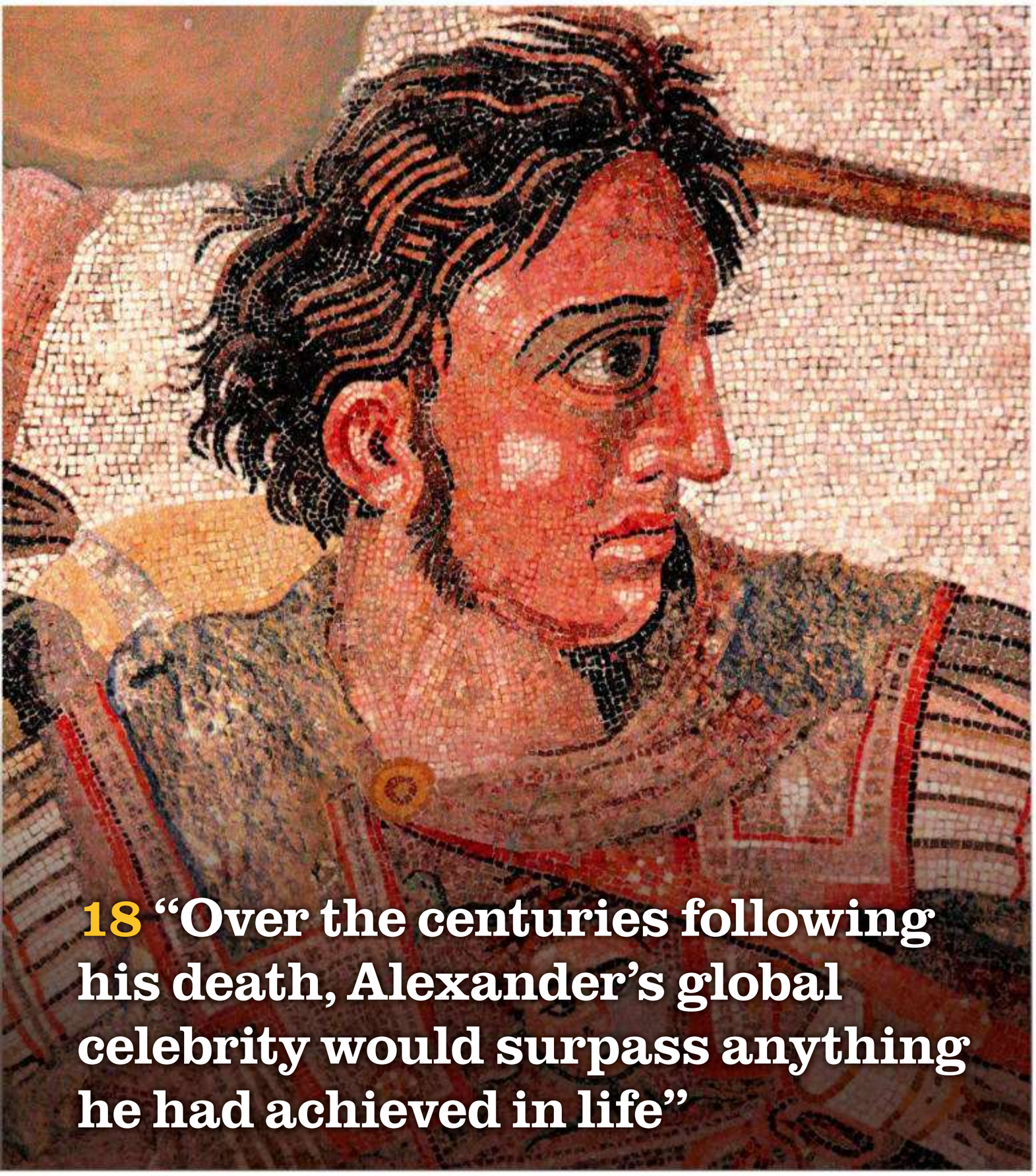
ALAMY/REUTERS/EYEVINE/GETTY IMAGES/LAURIE AVON





18 **“Over the centuries following his death, Alexander’s global celebrity would surpass anything he had achieved in life”**

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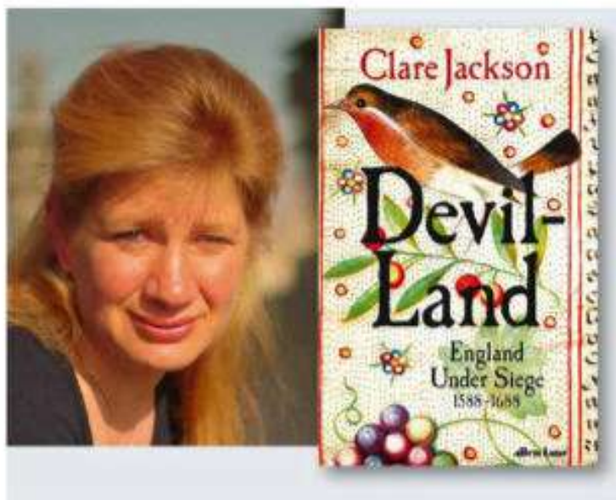
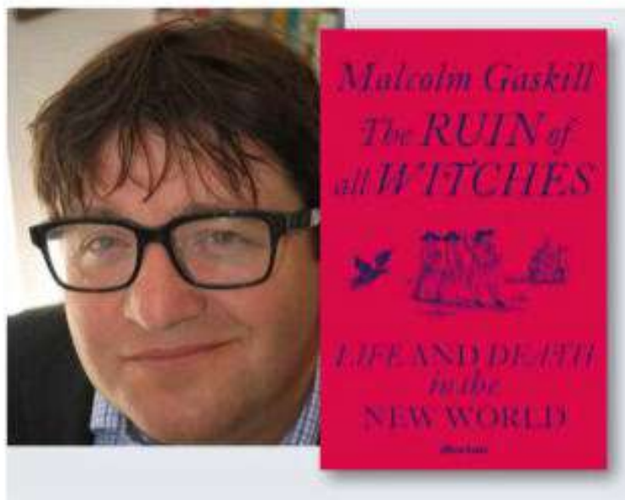
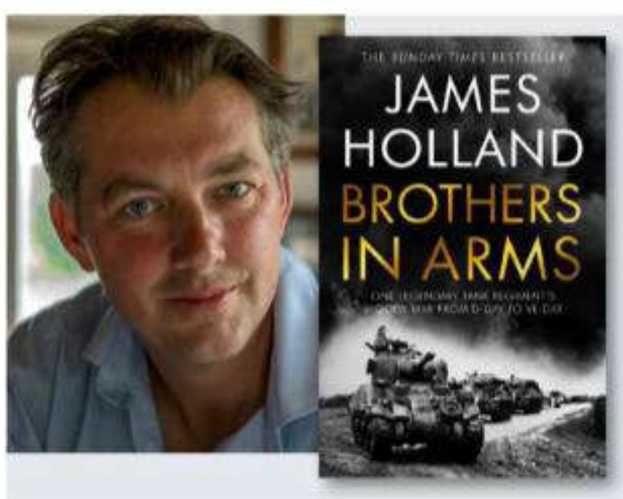


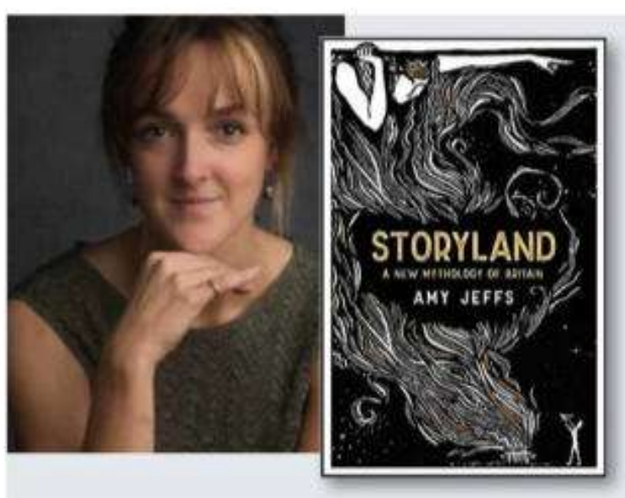
Clare Jackson
4 November



Malcolm Gaskill
25 November

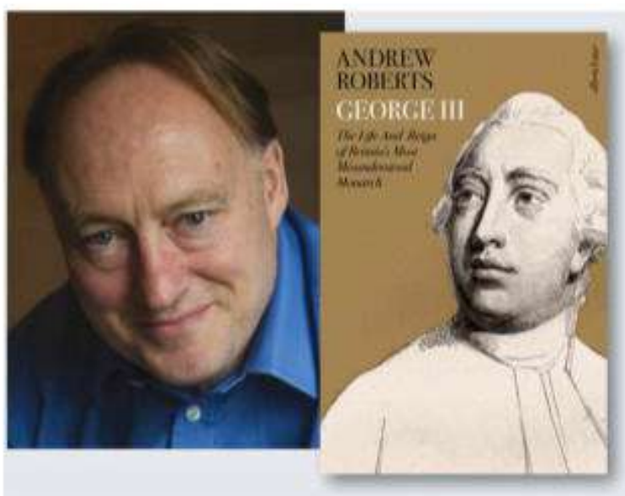


James Holland
11 November



Amy Jeffs
2 December

Fatima Manji
18 November



Andrew Roberts
16 December

ALASTAIR MCCORMICK/WILY WILKINSON/SOPHIE DAVIDSON/HELEN ATKINSON

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

SHUTTERSTOCK

EYE-OPENER

The next chapter

Chronicling the mythic adventures of a Sumerian king and dating back to the second millennium BC, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is thought to be the world's oldest work of literature. Now one of the tablets used to record a version of the story – the 3,500-year-old artefact pictured right – has returned to the region in which it was created.

The section is written in the Akkadian language of ancient Mesopotamia – a region of western Asia that included what's now Iraq. It tells the story of the titular king relating his dreams to his mother, who interprets them as foretelling the arrival of a new companion.

The tablet's location was unknown for more than a decade after it was looted from a museum in Iraq in 1991. After being smuggled around the world and sold several times, it was eventually seized in the United States in 2019 for being illegally imported into the country. It's now set to be displayed at the National Museum in Baghdad after being ceremonially handed over by US officials in September.

Have a story? Please email Matt Elton at matt.elton@immediate.co.uk

TALKING POINTS

Not much going on

Calls for the world to enter a "decisive decade" prompted Twitter users to look back at particularly indecisive periods in global history. **ANNA WHITELOCK** chose to follow the discussion

In his first address to the United Nations in September, US president Joe Biden urged global co-operation through "a decisive decade for our world". In response, University of Oxford historian **Peter Frankopan** (@peterfrankopan) asked: "Which was the 'least decisive decade' in the past 2,000 years?" As you'd expect, the answers were suitably imaginative and wide-ranging.

Rich (@pibasedlifeform) replied: "'It must be 1430 to 1440. According to the history I was taught at school, nothing happened from Agincourt to the start of the Wars of the Roses – certainly nothing worth talking about." **Priya Kale** (@priya_kale) commented: "I always feel that 1900 to 1910 was the boiled egg white of historical decades – insipid, boring, and frankly, no one pays it any attention unless one has no other choice." Historian and author **Rebecca Rideal** (@RebeccaRideal) was similarly forthright: "Controversial one, but the 1650s in England. Loads happened but, in the end, a lot remained the same."

Looking further afield, **Rutger K** (@AnotherAspirin) tweeted: "In the Carolingian corner [the dynasty that ruled western Europe from the eighth to tenth century]? The years 780 to 790… lots of (in-) fighting, but little by way of decisions. I'm sure some stuff happened and they wrote a bunch, and I'm sure things were decided but mostly it was – just a decade."

Join the debate at **twitter.com/historyextra**

University of Cambridge PhD student **Nick Wise** (@nickwizzo) offered a fascinating response, drawing on a tool used in the fields of computational linguistics and probability known as "n-grams", which look for repeated words and phrases in a sample of text or speech. He tweeted: "'According to n-grams, the 1990s were the most decisive decade, while no decades before the 1940s were decisive. Decisiveness has been increasing over the past decade since a low in the mid-2000s." **Adam Tyndall** (@Adam Tyndall) came to a similar conclusion, albeit for different reasons: "Surely the least decisive decade in the past 2,000 years is the most recent one? All of the others have had a decisive impact on it, but it has impacted no other decade (yet). [Spot the philosophy graduate amongst the historians.]"

But **D Allen History** (@dallen_history) wasn't sure. "True," he replied, "but could you not argue that it has had a major impact as time in the previous decade would have been spent planning for it, and thus major 'decisive' decisions have been made because of it? Or is that going too far?" And so it went on. Maybe next time we might ask which was the *most* decisive decade? Although, as **Bill Tompson** (@william_tompson) put it: "All decades are decisive, but some decades are more decisive than others"! H

Traffic on Regent Street in London, c1901. Was the ensuing decade really, as one Twitter user put it, "insipid and boring"?

Anna Whitelock is chair in history at City, University of London

> "I always feel that 1900 to 1910 was the boiled egg white of historical decades"

An artist's impression of the clothes that may have been worn thousands of years ago. New research suggests they were fashioned using animal bones

ARCHAEOLOGY

Humans "wore clothes 120,000 years ago"

Fashions may come and go, but new analysis of animal bones found in a cave in Morocco suggests that clothes have been part of human life for tens of thousands of years.

Experts examined bones from Contrebandiers Cave, on the country's Atlantic coast, which is known to have contained the remains of early humans. Some are thought to have been used as tools to transform animal skins into clothing. The rounded ends of one device, known as a spatulate, could have been employed to scrape connective tissues from pelts without damaging the skins themselves, while other tools may have been used for working leather or fur. Bones from animals including jackals, wildcats and sand foxes, meanwhile, appear to bear patterns of marks where the fur was removed, pointing to their use for clothing rather than for meat.

The study, published in the journal *iScience*, analysed 62 bones dating from between 90,000 and 120,000 years ago. Its findings are particularly important because skins and furs are unlikely to be preserved over such a long period of time, meaning that researchers have to turn to other evidence to gain a picture of the kind of clothing worn by our distant ancestors. The location of the bones is also intriguing: the region's climate would have been temperate during this period, suggesting that the clothes may have been used at least partly for ornamental, rather than strictly practical, purposes. H

SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY/SHUTTERSTOCK/GREATER ANGLIA

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the **history headlines**

The human footprints were found on Alkali Flat in New Mexico, around 200 miles south of Albuquerque

▲ Footprints are "oldest evidence of humans in the Americas"

The question of when humans first arrived in the Americas has long sparked debate, with a series of finds made over the past 20 years pushing that date further and further back. Now sets of footprints discovered near the edge of a lake in New Mexico appear to point to a human presence 7,000 years earlier than has widely been accepted.

The markings, in Alkali Flat lakebed, date to between 23,000 and 21,000 years ago. They seem to have been largely made by teenagers and children, with occasional adult accompaniment, and appear to head backwards and forwards – possibly indicating a hunting party.

As well as suggesting the existence and migration of previously unknown, earlier groups which then became extinct, the find is also interesting because of its location in what's now the south-western US. That's a long way from the Bering Strait – the land bridge that linked Siberia and Alaska in the last Ice Age – which could indicate that humans set out on that journey sooner, and that they moved more quickly across the continent than was previously thought.

Anne Lister statue unveiled in Yorkshire hometown ▼

A sculpture of 19th-century diarist and landowner Anne Lister has been installed in Halifax, the west Yorkshire town in which she lived. Often described as the "first modern lesbian", Lister kept coded diaries chronicling her relationships with women – including Ann Walker, with whom she spent the final years of her life. The statue, in the courtyard of the town's Piece Hall, was unveiled by Suranne Jones, who portrays the diarist in BBC drama *Gentleman Jack*, and its creator, Sally Wainwright, who used the diaries extensively to research the series.

Gentleman Jack actor Suranne Jones with the statue of Anne Lister, newly erected in Halifax

▶ Pencil drawing of old man identified as van Gogh work

Experts have confirmed that a sketch held in a private collection in the Netherlands for more than a century is a work by renowned 19th-century Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh.

The drawing (pictured right) was made using thick pencil and watercolour paper and depicts an elderly man with his head in his hands. It was created early in van Gogh's career, in November 1882, when he was living in The Hague. During that period the artist drew numerous studies of people, and the subject of this image, labourer Adrianus Jacobus Zuyderland, appears in dozens of drawings – including another very similar image, *Worn Out*, created in the same month. Indeed, the newly authenticated sketch, fittingly titled *Study for Worn Out*, appears to have been used as the direct basis for that work.

The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, whose researchers authenticated the drawing, is set to display the sketch until it is returned to its owner on 2 January 2022.

The newly identified sketch measures 49cm by 30cm and was coated with a fixative of milk and water

Victorian luggage ledger falls through station ceiling ▼

Contractors working to repair the rotting ceiling of a small Cambridgeshire railway station inadvertently uncovered a 19th-century ledger when it fell from the attic. The handwritten "day book" (pictured right) which dates from April 1885 and details passenger luggage and outgoing parcels, was found at March railway station, situated on the line between Ely and Peterborough. The renovation work also revealed a cache of other documents, including notes on the goods trains passing through the station, and records of goods sent via Red Star Parcels, the British Rail's consignment service which operated for more than 30 years between 1963 and 1999. H

MICHAEL WOOD ON...
A PIONEER OF PHOTOJOURNALISM

"We should salute a towering figure in the history of photography"

Photography has changed our world. And this autumn sees the hundredth anniversary of the death of perhaps the greatest photographer: John Thomson, pioneer of social documentary, and founding father of photojournalism. Thomson's towering achievements in the 1860s include not only producing one of the most important early photographic records of China and the far east, but also creating some of the most famous images of the Victorian poor.

Thomson was born in Edinburgh in 1837, the eighth of nine children. After apprenticing to an optical and scientific instrument manufacturer, in 1862, aged 24, he travelled to Singapore, where he opened a photographic studio, taking portraits of British colonists and merchants. But there he became fascinated by the "Other", and over the next 10 years – travelling in places such as Burma, Cambodia and, especially, China – he produced what is in my estimation the greatest photographic record of indigenous cultures of the east in the 19th century. Exploring mountains and jungles, he was the first to document the stupendous temples of Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

In the late 1860s Thomson arrived in China in the wake of the Taiping Rebellion in which at least 20 million people had died from war, famine and disease. His journeys there included a 3,000-mile trek up the Yangzi river carrying a camera, plates and chemicals with him. Thomson was the first ever photographer to access the deep countryside, taking pictures of all levels of society, from beggars to mandarins. Amazingly, this included intimate and affecting portraits of Chinese women both high and low – pictures that reveal an artist of profound insight and humanity.

Thomson's travels in China were often perilous. Along with local helpers (and his dog, Spot, as a companion), he visited remote, almost unpopulated regions far inland. Most of the people he encountered had never seen a westerner or a camera before.

At the time it was believed that having one's photograph taken resulted in the life-threatening loss of vital essence. A photographer, therefore, was frequently looked on as a forerunner of death. There were occasions when Thomson witnessed Chinese people so terrified that they begged him not to approach with his fatal lens. On one occasion, when he was taking a photo of a tower not far from Guangdong in the south-east of the country, Thomson was assaulted on the riverbank by a mob that drove him into the river. Luckily he was hauled out of the water by two women in a boat. But he spent time explaining and reassuring through his interpreters, and his pictures show an uncanny rapport between subject and camera. Some of his Chinese portraits are spellbinding in their intimacy.

In 1872, Thomson returned to England, bringing with him an unsurpassed portrait of late imperial China on the eve of the modern age. He opened a studio in Brixton and continued to innovate and explore, achieving international fame through his writings, books, lectures and teaching. He was among the first to combine photography with the printed word, playing a key role in the evolution of the kind of photojournalism we know worldwide today. He produced a monthly magazine, *Street Life*, in which he documented the lives of the people of London's East End – a truly remarkable portrait of the poor in the Victorian age. He also developed the technical processes to reproduce photographs in books: his eight volumes of photographs were bestsellers.

Thomson was so in demand that he opened a studio in Buckingham Palace Road and became a photographer of high society in Mayfair: he received the Royal Warrant in 1881 when Queen Victoria made him official photographer to the royal family. In 1886 he also began instructing explorers at the Royal Geographical Society in the use of photography to document their own travels.

Nearly 700 of Thomson's glass plates survive (now chiefly in London's Wellcome Institute) and recent exhibitions of his photographs in cities such as Shanghai have attracted huge and fascinated crowds, intrigued by his unrivalled portrait of late imperial China and its people, rich and poor. One of the outstanding geniuses in the history of photography, Thomson deserves to be known better. Time for the BBC and the National Museum of Scotland to step up? H

VISIT The exhibition **China – Through the Lens of John Thomson** is running at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh until 22 March 2022. Booking is essential. *bit.ly/2YkamCH*

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and his books include *The Story of China* (Simon & Schuster, 2021). His Twitter handle is @mayavision

BBC

A Manchu woman has her headdress arranged in an image taken by the pioneering photographer John Thomson in c1869

GETTY IMAGES

Journeys through history

See Rome –and four other beautiful Italian cities – in a different light while on a Cultural Odysseys Shakespeare's Italy tour

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Istanbul: City of Empires
Explore Ottoman and Byzantine worlds in the company of award-winning narrative historian Roger Crowley, view mosques and minarets from a private boat on the Bosphorus, and enjoy a private visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Modernism in Catalonia
Writer and curator Dr Jeremy Roe, an authority on visionary architect Antoni Gaudí, will guide you through Barcelona's masterpieces before travel to the resort of Sitges and the mountain stronghold of Montserrat.

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ANNIVERSARIES

DOMINIC SANDBROOK highlights events that took place in December in history

20 DECEMBER AD 69

Vitellius is pelted with dung and murdered

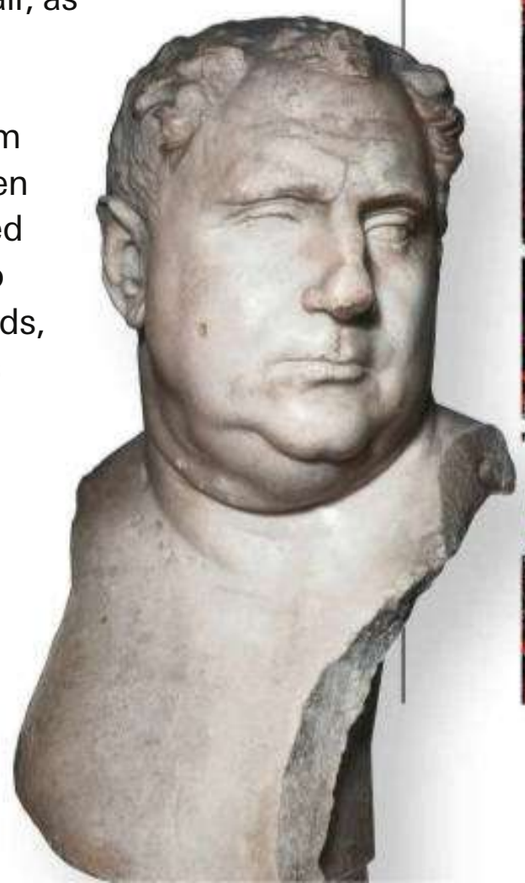
The Roman emperor's corpse is then dumped in the Tiber

The Roman emperor Vitellius was a very fat man. "His besetting sins," wrote the historian Suetonius, "were luxury and cruelty. He divided his feasts into three, sometimes into four a day: breakfast, luncheon, dinner and a drinking bout; and he was readily able to do justice to all of them through his habit of taking vomiting agents." On the road he would "snatch bits of meat and cakes amid the altars, almost from the very fire, and devour them on the spot".

Vitellius became emperor in April AD 69, 10 months after the death of Nero. But after only three months he learned that a rival general, Vespasian, had been proclaimed in the east and was marching on Rome. Vitellius's loyalists organised dogged resistance, but by mid-December the eastern legions were fighting their way into the capital.

The end of Vitellius's gourmandising career came on 20 December. He had taken refuge in the palace door-keeper's house, but Vespasian's soldiers soon tracked him down. "They bound his arms behind his back, put a noose about his neck, and dragged him with rent garments and half-naked to the Forum," wrote Suetonius. "All along the Sacred Way he was greeted with mockery and abuse, his head held back by the hair, as is common with criminals… Some pelted him with dung and ordure, others called him incendiary and glutton." Then they drew their swords, killed him and threw the body into the Tiber. Vitellius's last words, apparently, were: "Yet I was once your emperor!"

BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES



A second-century bust of Vitellius, whose cruelty and gluttony made him a target of abuse

An engraved portrait of the pioneering African-American politician Joseph Rainey

12 DECEMBER 1870

In Washington, DC, the formerly enslaved Joseph Rainey is sworn in as congressman from South Carolina, becoming **the first black American** to sit in the House of Representatives.

10 DECEMBER 1520

Martin Luther sets fire to a papal bull

The religious reformer treats Pope Leo X's demand that he recant with public contempt

Exsurge, Domine! "Arise, O Lord!" So began the papal bull promulgated by Leo X on 15 June 1520, written in response to the *Ninety-Five Theses* by the German church reformer Martin Luther. With Luther's ideas spreading across Germany, the pope and his allies were desperate to stamp their authority onto the debate.

By some accounts, Leo was given the first draft of the bull when he was at his hunting lodge, relaxing after pursuing wild boar. That was oddly fitting, since the text called for God to strike back against "the foxes and wild boar who are destroying the vineyard of the Lord, who had bestowed jurisdiction over it to Peter and his successor". It rejected Luther's ideas as "heretical, scandalous, false [and] offensive", and made it illegal for any Christian man or woman "to read, assert, preach, praise, print, publish, or defend them". As for Luther himself, he and his "accomplices" were given 60 days to recant his views – or face the direst penalties in the church's arsenal.

But Luther was a fighter. When copies of the bull were posted in German towns, students tore them down. And Luther himself treated it with utter contempt. "Whoever wrote this bull, he is Antichrist," he declared. "I protest before God, our Lord Jesus, his sacred angels and the whole world that with my whole heart I dissent from the damnation of this bull, that I curse and execrate it as sacrilege and blasphemy."

That was pretty strong. Even stronger, though, was Luther's performance on 10 December 1520, 60 days after he had received his copy and been told to recant. Having summoned the students of Wittenberg to a public meeting near the town's Elster Gate, he lit a bonfire and began tossing papal publications into it. Then he held the bull itself above the flames. "Because you have confounded the truth of God," he yelled, "today the Lord confounds you. Into the fire with you!"

ILLUSTRATION BY **BECCA THORNE**

A play at Covent Garden's Theatre Royal in 1804. The theatre was opened by John Rich in 1732

7 DECEMBER 1732

Having made a fortune from John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, the actor-manager John Rich opens a new theatre in a former convent garden in London's Bedford Estate on the site of what's now **the Royal Opera House**.

GETTY IMAGES

Supporters of the Pakistan Peoples Party light candles in December 2015 on the eighth anniversary of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's death

27 DECEMBER 2007

Benazir Bhutto is assassinated

The death of Pakistan's former prime minister triggers violent riots across the country

After eight years in exile, the former prime minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, returned to her native land in the autumn of 2007, determined to meet the people before a possible power-sharing deal with her old enemy General Pervez Musharraf. On the day of her return, 18 October, her motorcade was attacked by suspected al-Qaeda suicide bombers outside Karachi airport, killing at least 150 people. But Bhutto herself was unhurt, and she vowed not to be deterred – although she did ask for protection to be provided by the foreign security firms Blackwater and ArmorGroup.

Late in the afternoon of 27 December, Bhutto had just addressed a rally of her Pakistan Peoples Party at the Liaquat National Park, Rawalpindi, and was waving to the crowd, when the cheers were interrupted by shots and screams. Even now, exactly what happened remains uncertain. Some witnesses said they saw a gunman firing into Bhutto's white Land Cruiser as it began to move off; others thought she had been hit by shrapnel as a suicide bomber detonated his vest. Still others suggested that all the bullets had missed Bhutto, and that she fell backwards into her car to avoid the shots, was rocked further backwards by the suicide blast and then fractured her skull on the sunroof catch of the car.

Either way, Bhutto was rushed to hospital, reaching the Rawalpindi General at 5.35pm. By an extraordinary coincidence, the doctor operating on her was the son of the doctor who had operated on another prime ministerial assassination victim, Liaquat Ali Khan – after whom the park had been named – in 1951. The doctor's father had been unable to save Liaquat; and he, tragically, was unable to save Bhutto.

She was pronounced dead at 6.16pm, triggering riots across Pakistan. Some of her supporters attacked the hospital itself; others attacked police stations, government buildings, shops and offices. Hundreds of banks were destroyed, and the entire national railway system ground to a halt. In all, more than 100 people were killed.

An illustration of Huckleberry Finn, 1884. It took Mark Twain almost a decade to finish the novel

10 DECEMBER 1884

Huckleberry Finn comes to Britain

Mark Twain's masterpiece is branded "trash" in the States, but still flies off the shelves

Mark Twain had no sooner finished *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* than he thought of a sequel. It would be based on Tom's friend Huckleberry Finn, and in the course of 1876 he set to work, scribbling on sheets of notepaper. The trick, he realised, would be to capture Huck's vernacular dialect, a new departure in American writing. The opening line, for example, began as "You will not know about me," but only after several drafts did Twain find Huck's inimitable voice: "You don't know about me, without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter."

The novel's gestation, however, was slow and painful. For some years, Twain was stuck and put it off. He only managed to finish it after he had written another book, a memoir of his days as a steamship pilot on the Mississippi. At last, at the end of 1884, the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was finished, and was published in Britain on 10 December by Chatto & Windus – though American publication, oddly, had to wait a few more weeks.

Alas, not everybody liked it. In New England, one library committee called it "the veriest trash", adding that it was "more suited to the slums than to intelligent, respectable, people". Twain thought that was hilarious. "This will sell us another 25,000 copies for sure!" he wrote. And he was right. H

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian, author and broadcaster. His new series of history books for children, *Adventures in Time* (Particular Books), is available now

ALAMY

WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER...

The **Statute of Westminster**, a cornerstone of the Commonwealth

BY **ASHLEY JACKSON** AND **ANDREW STEWART**

What was the Statute of Westminster, and when was it enshrined?
The Statute of Westminster was a key moment in the journey of Britain's dominions towards independence. It passed through parliament in December 1931 – 90 years ago this month – enshrining in law the 1926 Balfour Declaration's recognition that Australia, Canada, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland, New Zealand and South Africa were equal, not subordinate, to Britain, freely associating as members of a "Commonwealth of Nations".

The statute removed Westminster's right to legislate for the dominions, thereby establishing their legislative independence. They could now legislate beyond as well as within their own borders, join the League of Nations (except Newfoundland), conclude treaties with other states, declare war on their own behalf and develop diplomatic representation abroad. New Zealand was the last to ratify the statute, in 1947.

What impact did it have on Britain's relations with the dominions?
In the short term, not much of one; in many ways, there was a hollowness to the document, and it was more about *status* than substance. The dominions were not yet independent, and were still reliant on Britain for trade, investment and security. The statute was a clever expression of the relationship between Britain and the fully self-governing units of the empire, acknowledging their mature stature but not removing the established links.

Over the longer term, however, these ties loosened. The statute provided the dominions with the legal apparatus necessary to develop their own nationhood and pursue their own regional and international agendas. Britain could no longer automatically speak on their behalf in the councils of the world – and this created fault lines at the heart of the empire. Although (with the exception of Ireland, which left the Commonwealth in 1949) the dominions' outlook tended towards them operating as a unit, they were free to make their own way in the world.

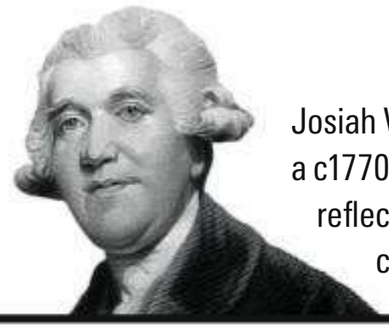
A Second World War poster shows British empire military personnel. The Statute of Westminster was part of the long process of dismantling the empire

Why should we remember the Statute of Westminster today?
As Britain's power contracted in the mid-20th century, the dominions took advantage of the freedoms the statute granted them. As such, it provided the basis for their full independence.

What's more, in expressing the idea of an association of politically equal states, the statute was a cornerstone of the modern Commonwealth. Britain originally hoped to exercise leadership through the Commonwealth but, as former colonies gained independence and became members, it evolved into a genuinely free and equal association of nations. With 54 members, it is today one of the world's most prominent inter-state organisations, its purpose "to promote prosperity, democracy and peace, amplify the voice of small states, and protect the environment". H

Ashley Jackson (left) is professor of imperial and military history at King's College, London. **Andrew Stewart** is professor of war studies at the Australian National University

LETTERS



Josiah Wedgwood as depicted in a c1770 engraving. Reader Tim May reflects on his contribution to the campaign against the slave trade

LETTER OF THE MONTH

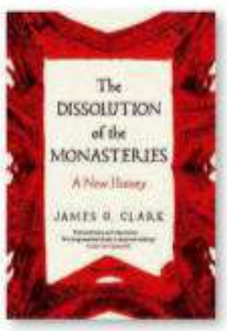
Fighting prejudice

As an ex-amateur boxer, I was interested in the reference to black American world heavyweight champion Jack Johnson in *Prejudice on the Pitch* (October). My great uncle Alan fought Johnson in Portsmouth on 11 June 1908. Because of Home Office interference, only a "demonstration" bout was permitted – so although a huge crowd attended, the gate money was modest. Johnson took the lot. Ex-mercenary Alan was satisfied to enter the record books.

Perhaps of equal interest is George Dixon, the first black boxer to be awarded a world title in 1890. He arrived in Britain claiming to be the world bantamweight champion, but had won it in America. The British regarded this title as belonging to the invincible Edwin "Nunc" Wallace of Birmingham. Dixon (pictured left, c1890) persisted, so a bout was held at the Pelican Club, a sleazy gambling venue in Denman Street, London. Amid a torrent of racial abuse, the 19-year-old Dixon, standing 5ft 3ins, squared up to the scowling Wallace. After 18 relentless rounds the unthinkable happened: Wallace was beaten.

Dixon went on to fight an estimated 700 bouts. He died at the age of 37 on the streets of New York, an anonymous, alcoholic wreck. Africville, Nova Scotia, the town of his birth, has crafted a stunning mural in his honour.

Terry McNamara, Sheffield



We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is **The Dissolution of the Monasteries: A New History** by James Clark. You can read our review of the book on page 76

Pottery and plantations

Tristram Hunt's fascinating article on Josiah Wedgwood (*The Radical Father of English Pottery*, October) mentions that Wedgwood's famous "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" cameo was known as "the Emancipation Medallion or Badge". In 1787, however, when Wedgwood's ceramic medallion became available, emancipation was not the immediate goal of the early campaign against slavery.

Wary of being seen to threaten plantation "property", in an era when pickpockets and sheep-stealers were hanged, the London Committee of the Society Instituted for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade felt obliged to assure MPs and the public that their objective was limited to abolition of the slave trade and did not extend to slave emancipation – contrary to the allegations of the West Indian planters and merchants. In August 1788, it issued a statement emphasising that "however acceptable a temperate and gradual abolition of Slavery might be to the wishes of Individuals it never formed any part of the Plan of this Society".

In his 1808 abolition history, Thomas Clarkson recorded his belief that, by focusing on the slave trade, the committee "would not incur the objection, that they were meddling with the property of the planters, and letting loose an irritated race of beings, who, in consequence of all the vices and infirmities, which a state of slavery entails upon those who undergo it, were unfit for their freedom". Of the other 11 original members of the committee, only chairman Granville Sharp insisted that it was his Christian duty to oppose "the toleration of slavery itself".

Tim May, London

Caught in the middle

Your feature in the October issue on *The (Surprisingly) Modern Middle Ages* brought back memories of my tutor, Dr Lynette Muir, in the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, Leeds University. Even 40 years later, I still remember her announcing with a flourish, at the beginning of a lecture: "What you have to remember about the Middle Ages is that they didn't *know* they were Middle!"

Fenella Barnes, Essex

Missed lessons

In the feature on history education (*What's the Future of Studying the Past?*, October), I was disappointed to see that the noted historians had failed, in my view, to come up with convincing arguments about why we should study history. To say that it has transferable skills, or teaches empathy, or is good preparation for leadership roles, is just not good enough to justify history as a university subject. The same is true of many other subjects such as English literature or sociology. The one that resonated most with me was Richard Partington's suggestion that it is good from a "leisure perspective", but that is hardly a justification from an academic point of view.

Bob Bass, Nuneaton

A haunting legacy

In reference to your *Q&A* article on the Greenbrier Ghost (September), your readers might enjoy knowing that *The Unquiet Grave* by Sharyn McCrumb tells the full story of Zona Heaster Shue, whose mother ensured that there was justice for the murder of her daughter in 1897, as noted in the article. McCrumb, of English and Scots descent, writes stories set in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia and North Carolina. Her ancestors are among the early settlers to this region of the US.

Janet Daulton, Virginia

Great Scott

I was delighted to read your article marking the 250th anniversary of the birth of Sir Walter Scott (September). I recently had the good fortune to visit his home at Abbotsford, near Melrose. The museum and house are fascinating, and show that Sir Walter was more than a novelist and poet. He was also a historian of Scotland, a collector of artefacts and a patron of the Scots Baronial style of architecture.

Having grown up in Ayrshire in the 1960s, my literary education revolved around Robert Burns, and the life and works of Sir Walter Scott were hardly touched upon. I hope that today the curriculum in Scottish

GETTY IMAGES/GLEN MCBETH

Glen McBeth's illustration of the Greenbrier Ghost, whose story elicited a response from reader Janet Daulton

One of the richly decorated rooms in Abbotsford, the house built for Sir Walter Scott in the 19th century. Reader Bryan Turner highlights the Scottish novelist's love of history

schools includes study of the rich legacy and inspiring talents of Sir Walter.
Bryan Turner, Worthing

Corrections

- A number of readers have contacted us about the image of Walt Disney World Resort in October's *Why We Should Remember*. Though it was captioned as showing "Goldilocks and the three bears", it was actually a photograph of the Country Bear Jamboree.

- As reader Gordon Campbell has pointed out, in *Windows on to History* (November), we gave the incorrect title to a Victorian hymn. It should have been 'Oft in the Stilly Night' rather than 'Oft in the Silly Night' as printed. Apologies for this stilly error, which was introduced during the editing process.

WRITE TO US

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Email: *letters@historyextra.com* **Post:** Our office is currently closed, so unfortunately we can only receive email communication at this time

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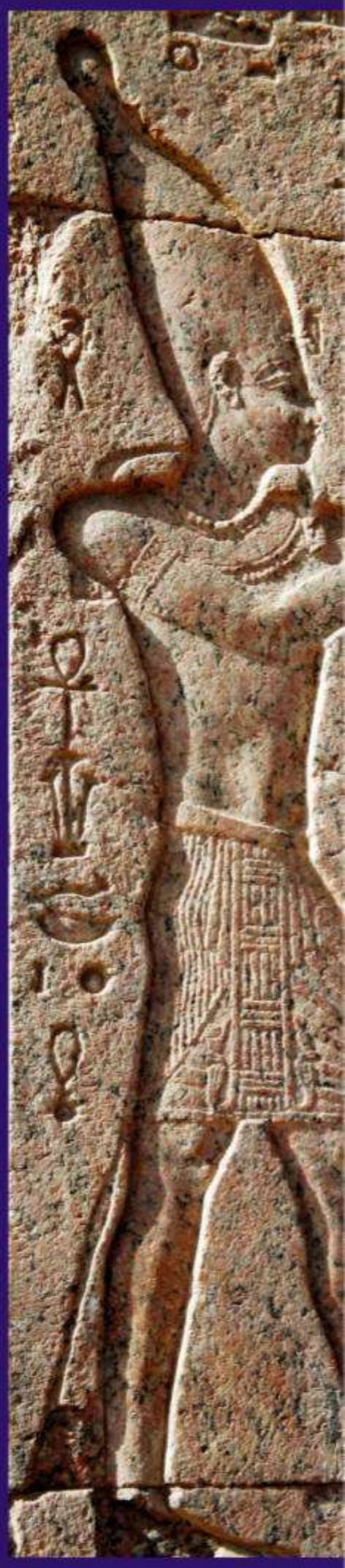

The world's first

When Alexander the Great died at the age of 32, his transformation into multicultural icon was only just beginning. **Edmund Richardson** chronicles the Macedonian king's remarkable afterlife as the original global A-lister

BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY/
GETTY IMAGES

Universal appeal
Alexander the Great depicted (from left to right): in the Roman *Alexander Mosaic*; on horseback in a c1445 adaptation of the *Alexander Romance*; as pharaoh in a fourth-century BC Egyptian relief; dressed as a Byzantine emperor in a 14th-century manuscript; and battling a dragon in the epic Persian poem the *Shahnameh*

superhero

A lethal diet
This 15th-century illustration shows Alexander and his queen sat at a table and (in the foreground) with a feather in his throat after being poisoned. The medieval Alexander suffers, bleeds and makes mistakes

In 321 BC, a very strange procession set out from Babylon. Alexander the Great was on the move. He had died two years earlier, in 323 BC, at the age of 32. Over the course of a few brief years, this astonishing soldier and statesman had transformed the ancient world. He marched his army from Macedon through Asia Minor to Egypt. He defeated the Great King of Persia, Darius III, in two enormous battles. The cities of the Persian empire – Babylon, Susa and Persepolis – fell before him. By his mid-20s, he had more wealth and power than any European in history. But it was not enough.

Alexander marched his army further and further east, across the heart of Asia and the mountains of Afghanistan, into battle with elephants and into lands where even the gods of Greece had never set foot.

He was never defeated in battle, but after many long years of campaigning, his soldiers laid down their arms on the banks of an Indian river, and would march no further. Alexander reluctantly led his army back to Babylon, where he died under mysterious circumstances (though some thought he had been poisoned).

So ended one of the most extraordinary lives in ancient history. But, in many respects, the story was only just beginning, for over the following centuries, Alexander's global celebrity would surpass anything he had achieved in life.

The body-snatcher

Alexander's death set off one of history's most brutal power-struggles, exacerbated by the fact that there was no obvious successor. One of his generals, Perdiccas, was named regent of the empire, but every ambitious commander began to grab as much wealth and power as possible.

In the chaos, Alexander himself was forgotten. For a while, his body was kept in a vat of honey to preserve it. Two years passed. Then, at last, he began his final journey back to Macedon, to be buried with his ancestors.

He never made it home. In Syria, Alexander's enormous, lumbering funeral carriage – a golden temple on wheels – was intercepted by one of his oldest friends, Ptolemy, the governor of Egypt. Ptolemy wanted Alexander's body for himself. He intended to take the body back to Egypt and claim the power that came with Alexander's legacy.

Ptolemy knew, though, that as soon as news of his body-snatching reached Perdiccas, he would become the most wanted man in the world. So, according to the *Varia Historia* (by the Roman author Aelian), Ptolemy "made an Alexander mannequin, dressed it like a king, and draped it in a gorgeous shroud. He laid it on one of the funeral carriages, and heaped it with gold, silver and ivory."

Alexander's actual body, Aelian also claims, "was sent to Egypt discreetly, in the least ostentatious way, along hidden and unused roads. Once Perdiccas captured the mannequin, with its magnificent carriage, he ordered his troops to halt. He was sure that Alexander was now his. He only realised that he had been tricked when it was too late."

Ptolemy's trick worked. Alexander's

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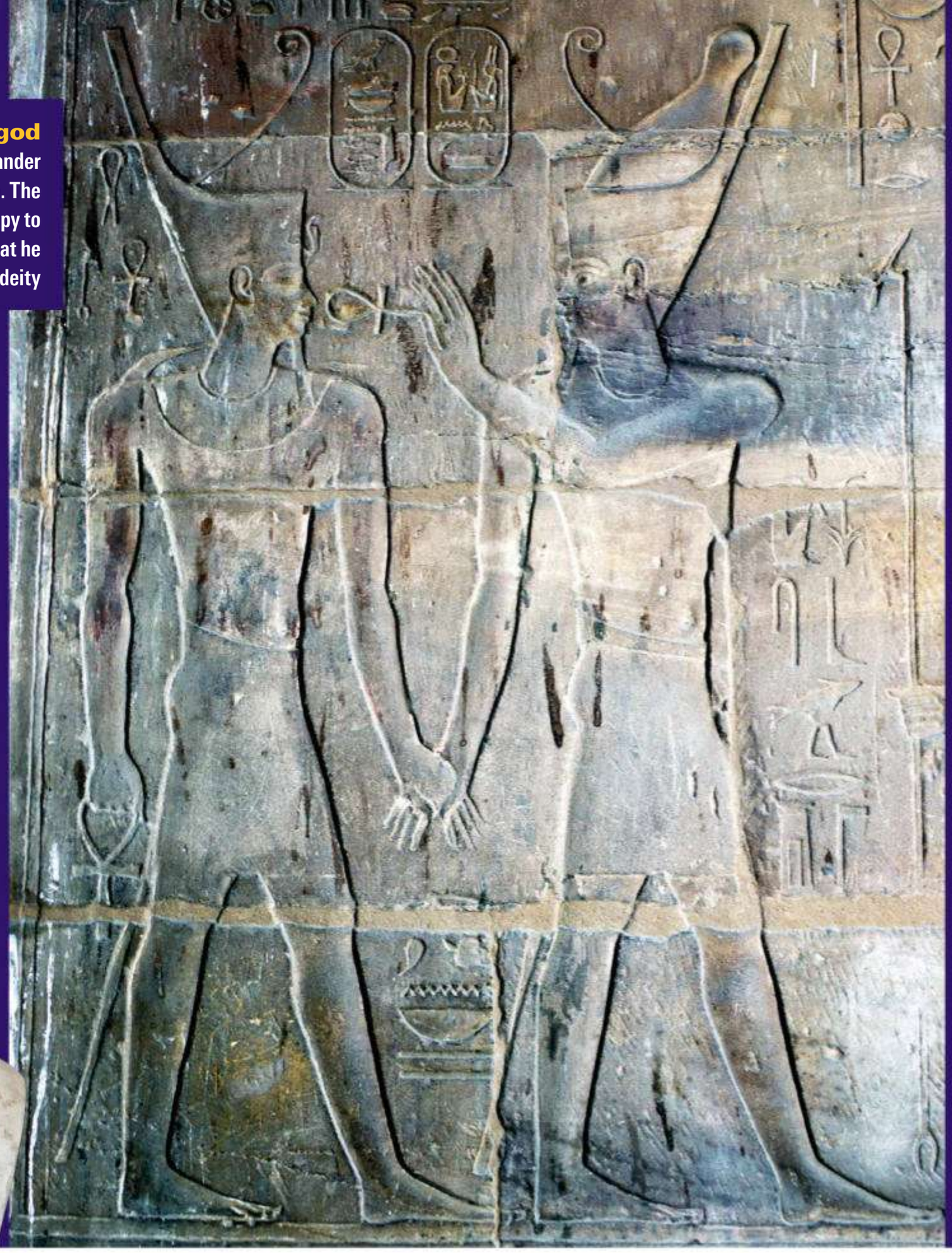


Son of god
A relief showing Alexander being blessed by Amun-Ra. The Macedonian leader was happy to allow rumours to spread that he was the son of the Egyptian deity

Raising the dead
A bust of Pharaoh Ptolemy I. His appropriation of Alexander's corpse in 321 BC supercharged his rise from ordinary Macedonian to ruler of Egypt

soldiers rallied round him. His power grew, and kept on growing. Born an ordinary Macedonian, Ptolemy died a pharaoh, halfway between a man and a god. He founded the last pharaonic dynasty, which endured 275 years, until Cleopatra VII.

Ptolemy was not the first, and he would not be the last, to claim Alexander for himself. While he appropriated Alexander's body, countless others appropriated Alexander's story. For more than 2,000 years, Greek and Roman historians, Egyptian storytellers, Persian poets, Ethiopian monks, Jewish scholars, Icelandic bards and many more have made Alexander their own as ruthlessly as Ptolemy did. Alexander has become a Persian king, an Islamic holy man and a Christian saint, and ultimately the world's first multicultural hero.

Divine intervention

The stories emerged soon after Alexander's death. Like many of the ancient world's best tales, they started in Egypt. "Many people think that Alexander was the son of King Philip of Macedon, but they are mistaken," declared one chronicle of his life. "The wisest of the Egyptians know that Alexander was not the son of Philip, but of Nectanebo."

Nectanebo II, pharaoh of Egypt, had fled before an invading Persian army – or so the story went. He sought refuge in Macedon, where he crept into the bed of Alexander's mother, disguised as the Egyptian god Amun. Alexander was an Egyptian all along.

It was an outrageous idea. But, during his lifetime, Alexander had encouraged an even more outrageous one. After he visited the oracle of Amun, hidden in the middle of Egypt's western desert, Alexander allowed rumours to spread that the god had recognised him as his son. Alexander's cartouche, or hieroglyphic pharaonic symbol, proclaims him "Son of Amun" and "Son of Ra". On coins minted soon after his death, he wears the ram's horns of Amun (see picture on page 23).

As time passed, the stories about Alexander kept getting taller. The Egyptian legend gave birth to dozens of other tales, each one

Over the past 2,000 years, Alexander has become a Persian king, an Islamic holy man and a Christian saint

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

wilder and more magical than the last. They came to be known as the *Alexander Romances*. The *Romances* have travelled further than Alexander himself ever did. There is an Icelandic *Alexanders Saga* and an Armenian *Romance*. Alexander fights dragons, journeys to the stars in a cage carried by griffins, and travels to the depths of the sea. He goes to stranger places, and sees stranger things, than anyone ever has before. The *Alexander Romances* are some of the most wondrous stories in history: they hover between dream and reality, the everyday and the fantastical, as artfully as Alexander himself.

One such tale, which circulated widely in the Middle Ages among Jewish writers of the diaspora, described Alexander's visit to Jerusalem. It was said that he marched on the city, prepared for battle. But when the high priest and the people of Jerusalem left the city to greet him, something unexpected happened. Alexander prostrated himself before the high priest – whom, he told his army, he had seen in a dream in Macedonia. The priest had "told me not to delay, but to cross the sea, for he would lead my army, and would grant me victory over the Persians". Alexander honoured the people of Jerusalem, and sacrificed to God in the temple.

Only, he did not. Alexander never went to Jerusalem. The story was an invention. But, for Jewish audiences, it was a necessary invention. It began to circulate hundreds of years after Alexander's expedition, in the wake of the sack of Jerusalem by Roman armies. Jewish communities – scattered, exiled and constantly persecuted – needed a story of how Alexander, the greatest conqueror of them all, had honoured their faith.

Medieval Christian authors had their own Alexander: a holy man who spoke to God, and whom God watched over. He travelled to the edges of the Earth, and built two enormous gates there, to protect the world. "Alexander shut 22 kings and nations behind the gates he called the Caspian," the story ran, including two old enemies from the Old Testament: Gog and Magog. In an Ethiopian version of the *Alexander Romance*, Alexander arrives at the Citadel of Adamant, an abandoned city in the desert. There, he and his men battle traps, hidden pits and a dancing clockwork automaton. All seems to be lost, but then God speaks to Alexander, and helps him to understand the forgotten language of the city, and to solve its mysteries.

But, for a long time, there was one place where Alexander's story was almost impossible to tell: Persia. Alexander's conquest was, after all, a time of destruction and of profound national humiliation. Then, around 1000 AD, the great Persian poet Firdausi composed his *Shahnameh*, or *Book of Kings*. In it, he told the story of Alexander, or Sikandar. And, drawing on the *Romances*, he transformed it. In the *Shahnameh*, Alexander is not the son of Philip of Macedon, but the secret son of Darab, king of Persia (in Firdausi's poem) before Darius. In other words, Alexander was Darius's elder brother, and the rightful heir to the Persian throne. He was, it turns out, a Persian all along.

Show of respect
Jewish writers popularised the tale of Alexander honouring their faith during a visit to Jerusalem, as depicted in this painting from c1736

The fatherless barbarian

The medieval Alexander is very different to the blood-soaked conqueror of the ancient historians. Alexander does not want to rule the world, he wants to understand it. He is obsessed with learning everything that can be learned, and seeing everything that can be seen. He is not just a warrior: he is a sage, a philosopher and an instrument of God.

But he is far from infallible. In fact, Alexander is intensely human. He suffers, bleeds, makes mistakes and loses his way, far more than the historical Alexander ever did. In the *Darab Nama*, a 12th-century Persian tale, he falls in love with Buran Dokht, the daughter of the king of Persia. Buran Dokht can't believe that Alexander has the nerve to propose to her. "I am descended from seven generations of kings," she tells her suitor. "'Why should I marry a fatherless barbarian?" She meets Alexander in battle, wielding a huge club, and puts his armies to flight. Only after he has been humbled does she agree to make peace.

This Alexander stumbles and falls. He reaches the gates of the Garden of Eden, but is refused admittance. He goes in search of

GETTY IMAGES

TIMELINE **Alexander the Great's extraordinary life**

356 BC
Alexander is born in Pella to King Philip II of Macedon and Olympias of Epirus.

343 BC
Aristotle travels to Macedon to become Alexander's tutor.

336 BC
Philip is assassinated, and **Alexander succeeds to the throne.** He is confirmed as leader of a pan-Hellenic expedition to Persia.

334 BC
After crossing into Asia Minor, Alexander's army defeats a Persian force at the **battle of the Granicus.**

333 BC
Alexander vanquishes Darius III, king of Persia, at the **battle of Issus.**

332 BC
The Greek army captures Tyre and Gaza, and **reaches Egypt.**

King Philip entrusts his son Alexander the Great to the tutorship of Aristotle in a 13th-century manuscript

Divine intervention
A coin shows Alexander wearing the ram horns of the god Amun. It is in this guise that he makes a shadowy appearance in the Qur'an

ALAMY/AKG-IMAGES

This Alexander stumbles and falls. He is abducted by fairies, chased by crabs and turned away from the Garden of Eden

the Water of Life, but his cook finds it instead. He is abducted by fairies, chased by giant crabs, and is perpetually on the brink of losing everything.

Alexander longs for immortality but can never achieve it. Only at the end of his story, on his death-bed, does he make peace with his own mortality. "If weapons and soldiers could fight off death, all the world's armies are here," he says, sadly. "If prayers and rosaries could fight off death, all the world's wise and holy men are here. If wealth and treasure could buy off death, all the treasures of the world are here." In spite of all his power, Alexander knows that he must die.

Alexander even makes a shadowy appearance in the Qur'an. It relates the legend of Dhu al-Qarnayn, or "the two-horned one", who travels to the ends of the Earth to build a wall to protect the world. The enemies behind the wall are familiar from the Christian story of Alexander's magical gates: Gog and Magog. The two horns of Dhu al-Qarnayn echo the ram's horns of Amun. Alexander's story weaves through the world, a common root-system uniting cultures and religions.

Heroic sacrifice

Everyone has a story about Alexander. And everyone's story is different. That is as true today as it was during the medieval period, and indeed during Alexander's own lifetime.

The first – and the best – teller of Alexander's story was Alexander himself. And he never told just one story. To the Greeks, he was a Homeric hero: sacrificing at the tomb of Achilles at Troy. To the Egyptians, he was son of Ra, and son of Amun. To the Persians, he was King of Kings: dressed like a Persian

331 BC
Alexander visits the oracle of Amun. Alexandria is founded in Egypt. In the autumn, Alexander defeats Darius again, at the battle of Gaugamela, and captures Babylon.

330 BC
Persepolis (modern-day Iran) is captured and looted. Alexander then sets off in pursuit of Darius, and catches up with him in July. **Darius is assassinated by two of his courtiers** before Alexander reaches him.

327 BC
Alexander's rule becomes increasingly brutal. Many of his closest companions, including his court historian Callisthenes, are executed. Alexander's invasion of India begins.

326 BC
The Indian ruler Porus is defeated in the battle of the Hydaspes (in modern-day Pakistan). In the summer, Alexander's troops mutiny and he is seriously wounded.

323 BC
In June, **Alexander falls ill in Babylon, and dies.**

Alexander defeats Darius III of Persia in battle in this scene from the c100 BC *Alexander Mosaic*

A late fourth-century BC coin shows a Macedonian on horseback charging an elephant during the battle of the Hydaspes

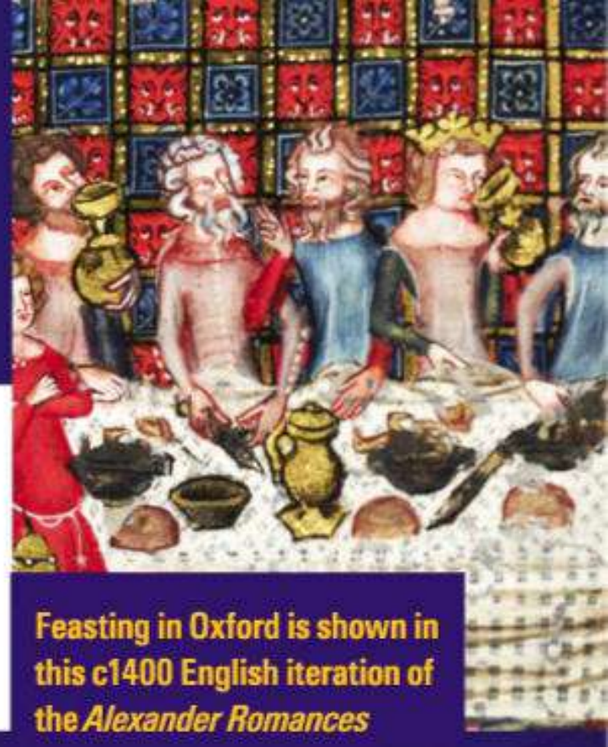
Alexander's global afterlife

How the Macedonian leader's posthumous impact outstripped even his epoch-shaping empire-building

MAP BY **PAUL HEWITT – BATTLEFIELD DESIGN**

English union

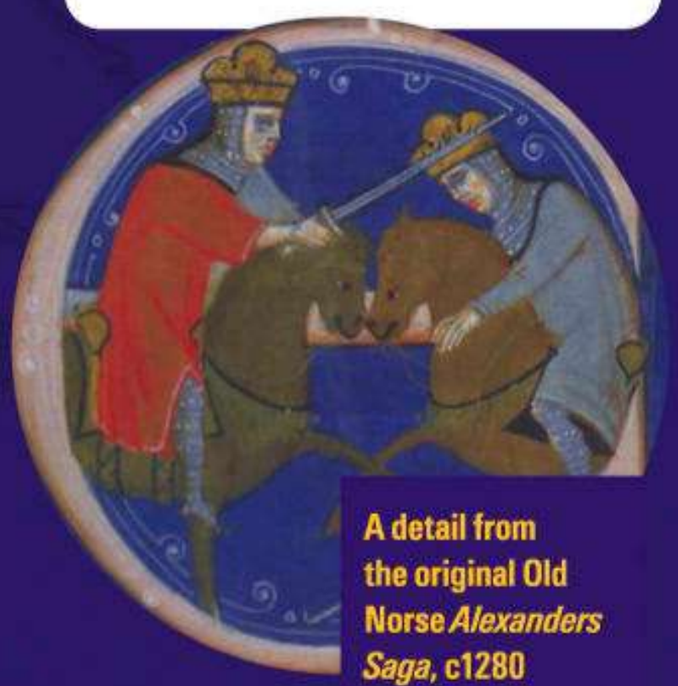
The *Alexander Romances* featured prominently in the *Talbot Shrewsbury Book*, which was famously presented to Margaret of Anjou on her betrothal to English king Henry VI.



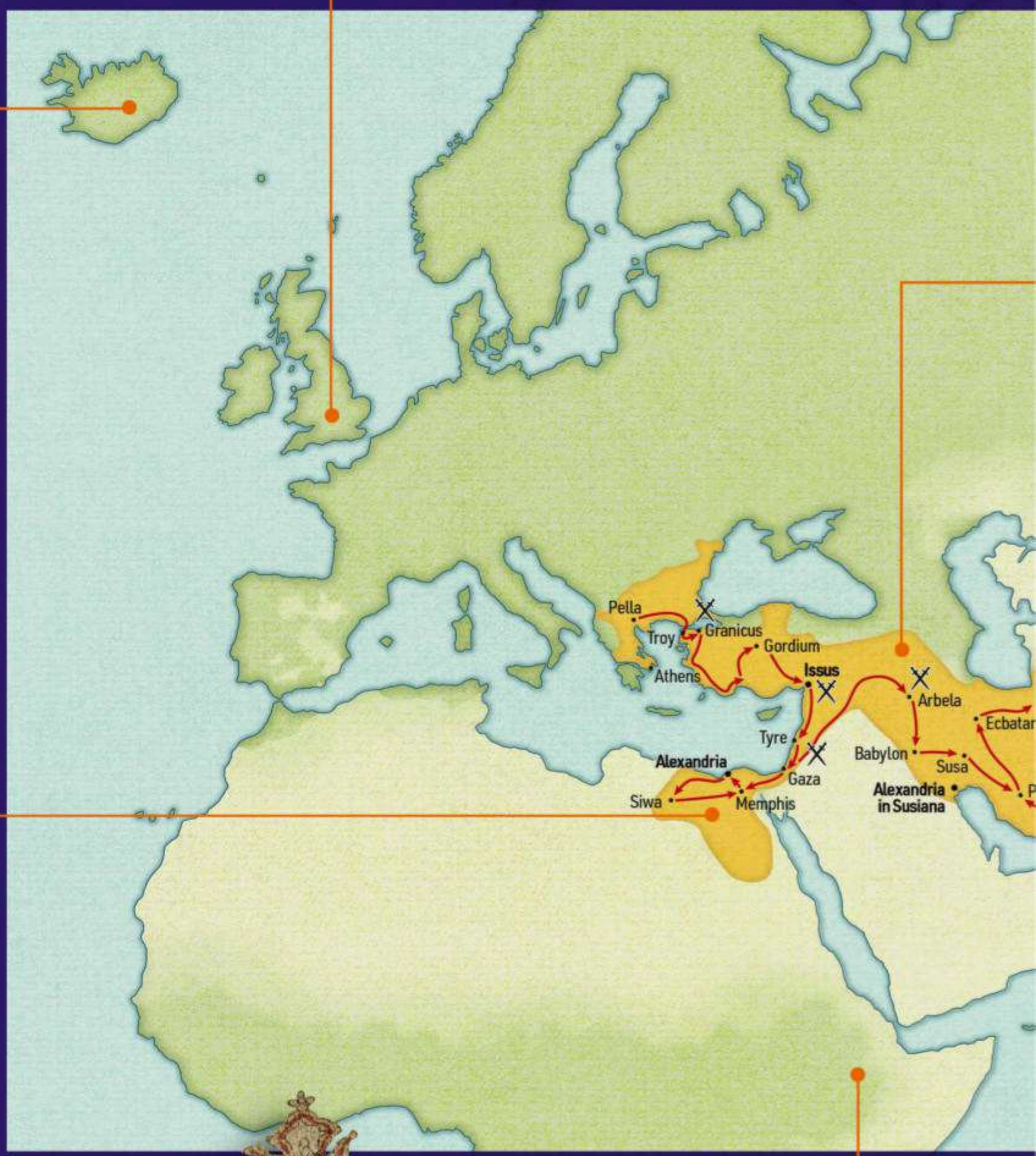
Feasting in Oxford is shown in this c1400 English iteration of the *Alexander Romances*

Icelandic sagas

Norse bards saluted Alexander's achievements in *Alexanders Saga*. Dating to as early as c1280, this translation of a Latin poem is considered one of Iceland's most important works of medieval literature.



A detail from the original Old Norse *Alexanders Saga*, c1280



God of Egypt

It was in Egypt that Alexander's journey to posthumous superstardom began, chiefly thanks to the rumours (fanned by Alexander himself) that he was not the son of King Philip of Macedon but of the deity Amun.

A detail of a fourth-century BC shrine to Alexander in Luxor, Egypt

Ethiopian battles

Over time, the escapades attributed to Alexander became ever more fanciful. In an Ethiopian version of the *Alexander Romances*, the hero battles traps, hidden pits and a dancing clockwork automaton.

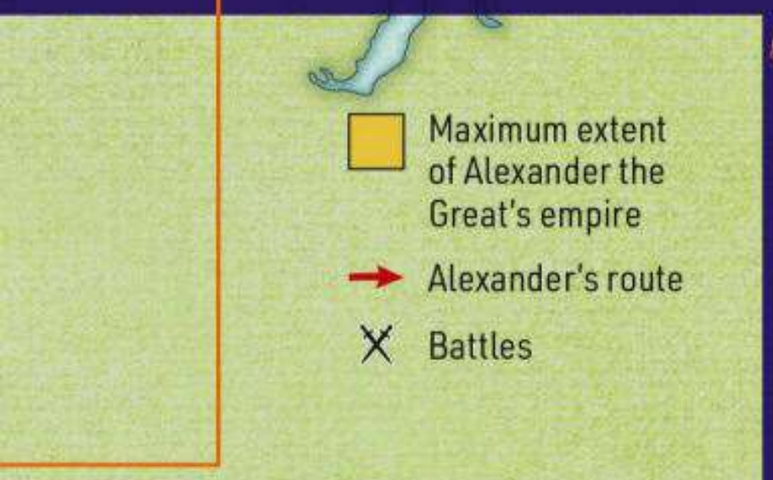
Alexander in an 18th-century Ethiopian scroll created to protect its owner from harm

BRIDGEMAN/AKG-IMAGES

Adventures in Armenia

The *Alexander Romances* were a literary phenomenon across Europe and western Asia, with translations being produced in languages including Coptic, Latin, Syriac, Arabic and Armenian.

Alexander talks with soldiers in a 14th-century Armenian version of the *Alexander Romances*



The heir to Persia

The author Firdausi transformed perceptions of Alexander among the people of Persia by casting him as the rightful heir to the Persian throne in his epic poem the *Shahnameh*.

Alexander speaks with a bird in the mountains in a scene from the *Shahnameh*

Indian impact

Such was the range of Alexander's cultural impact that rulers on the Indian subcontinent (which marked the eastern limits of his enormous empire) were still discussing Greek philosophy years after his death.

The art of Afghanistan

Following Alexander's conquests, modern-day Afghanistan became home to theatres, temples and impressive artworks produced by Greeks who settled there in his armies' wake.

Alexander on an early 20th-century textile label featuring Gujarati script

AKG/ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

Alexander wore many masks, and he told many stories about himself. He turned himself into a multicultural hero

king, and married to a Persian princess.

Some scholars have wondered, wistfully, if Alexander dreamed of uniting the world in a "brotherhood of man". He did not. Alexander was a brutal conqueror. If a city resisted, he would often wipe it off the face of the Earth, killing all the men and enslaving the women and children. But he was also a pragmatic conqueror. Alexander knew that fear alone would not hold his empire together. So he wore many masks, and he told many stories. He turned himself into a multicultural hero.

Shrinking the world

After Alexander's death, the destructiveness of his campaigns began to fade into history, but the stories he told remained. In Egypt, Ptolemy and his successors ruled from their hybrid, Greek-Egyptian capital of Alexandria. In Persia, Greeks learned the elaborate rituals of the Persian court. Indian kings discussed Greek philosophy. The Greeks who settled in Afghanistan built theatres and temples, and produced dazzling works of art, which would shape the earliest depictions of the Buddha. Slowly, the world grew closer together.

But is this really so surprising? The idea that we can draw clear boundaries between cultures is arguably more a modern concept than an ancient one. Years before Alexander reached Egypt, Greeks were living and working there. Years before Alexander's treasures made it back to Macedon, knowledge and ideas from across Asia were shaping Greek thought. The world has always been connected – through ideas, through heroes and through stories. H

Edmund Richardson is professor of classics at Durham University. His latest book, *Alexandria: The Quest for the Lost City*, is published by Bloomsbury. He discussed the book on a recent episode of our podcast: *historyextra.com/podcast*

LISTEN Melvyn Bragg and guests covered **Alexander the Great** in an episode of *In Our Time*. To listen, go to *bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b06d9bkx*

Advertisement feature

ABOVE: **A Supermarine Spitfire Mk.I takes to the skies on the museum's live airfield**

BELOW: **Visitors can enjoy many exhibits at Imperial War Museum Duxford, including a crash-landed Messerschmitt (centre) and a British Hurricane (right)**

Bringing the Battle of Britain to life

Follow in the footsteps of fighter pilots at Imperial War Museum Duxford

In the summer of 1940 fighter planes careered over Britain's skyline, with British Spitfires and Hurricanes exchanging gunfire with German Luftwaffe, miles above people's heads. This dramatic episode in British history is brought to life once more by IWM Duxford in Cambridgeshire.

IWM Duxford is renowned as one of the world's leading aviation museums, housing an extraordinary collection of historic aircraft. It's a place where propellers still turn, and chocks are still pulled away: you can stand within a few yards of vintage aircraft as they take off, and then watch them swoop and soar above you.

But it is also much more than that. IWM Duxford stands apart from other aviation museums because the site itself is an exhibit. The airfield has a fascinating history that stretches back to the First World War, and it played a key role in the Battle of Britain. From 10 July to 31 October 1940, RAF Duxford was a Sector Station, meaning it was responsible for directing squadrons into battle.

Get closer to the action

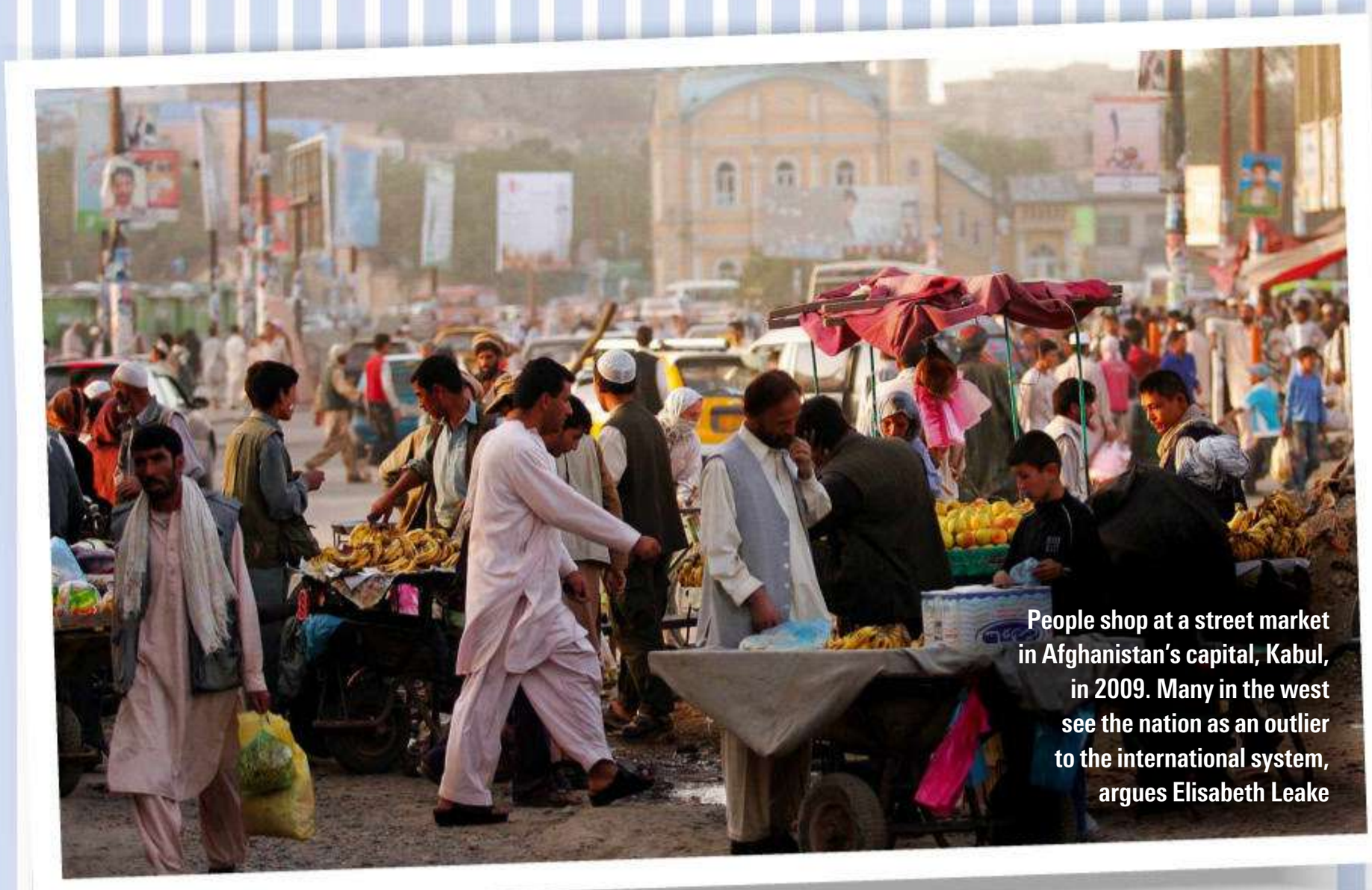
You can retrace the footsteps of "The Few" who flew for the nation, as the hangar that was used by Duxford's fighter squadrons has now been turned into IWM Duxford's Battle of Britain exhibition. Here, you can discover more about how the Battle of Britain was fought, getting up close to aircraft that flew in the aerial conflict – including two Hurricanes, a Spitfire and a crash-landed Messerschmitt. And to delve into the lives of the men and women who worked at RAF Duxford during the Battle of Britain, go to the Ops Block, a building that was also used in the war. Experience the atmosphere inside this critical room with an audio-visual recreation of the day that the battle reached its climax: 15 September 1940.

As well as the Battle of Britain displays, there's plenty more to discover in this mile-long historic site. Explore seven hangars and historic buildings filled with enormous aircraft, objects and personal stories from over 100 years of aviation history.

To plan your visit, go to **iwm.org.uk/iwm-duxford**

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUMS
DUXFORD

IWM Duxford want you to book a great day out at the museum without worry. If you, or any member of your party, test positive for Covid-19, experience symptoms or are asked to self-isolate by NHS test and trace, IWM Duxford will be happy to rebook your tickets for another time.



People shop at a street market in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, in 2009. Many in the west see the nation as an outlier to the international system, argues Elisabeth Leake

"Instability is a problem that has recurred throughout the history of Afghanistan"

In August, Taliban forces regained control of Afghanistan as US forces withdrew after two decades in the country. How can history help make sense of this seismic moment? We asked a panel of experts

INTERVIEW BY **MATT ELTON**

ON THE EI PODCAST

REUTERS

Matt Elton: How important is it to understand the history of Afghanistan to make sense of recent events?

Bijan Omrani: It's vital. Afghanistan's long history, and the way in which that history is a result of its geography and ethnic make-up, plays a crucial role in the forces acting on the nation today. The fact that neighbouring regions have frequently tried to treat Afghanistan as a frontier territory, despite its geography not really offering easy territory for it to *be* a frontier, has been a real motor for the way in which the region has developed.

William Dalrymple: The history of foreign interventions in Afghanistan haunts its former invaders, who came to a variety of unsatisfactory ends – whether withdrawal, bankruptcy, or outright defeat – and the Afghans themselves, who have a rich historiography of remembering those interventions. They look on the defeat of the East India Company in 1842, for example, as people in Britain look on the battle of Trafalgar: as a foundational narrative of the state.

Elisabeth Leake: It is, without question, important to think about Afghanistan's history to understand the current moment. But we also need to be very careful and nuanced in the way in which we engage with that history, and recognise its vibrancy and texture. A key problem in 21st-century western media coverage of Afghanistan is a focus on a set of key tropes that people often assume define its past. One is to see the nation as an "outlier", instead of thinking about the political and social dynamics that have emerged as a result of international relations and its relationship with its neighbours. Only by taking a more expansive view of Afghanistan and its people can we thoroughly understand what's going on now.

Rabia Latif Khan: I think we should also use the plural *histories* when we talk about Afghanistan. There are, of course, dominant official state narratives of the past, but my research and work with historical, marginal communities such as the Hazaras [a Persian-speaking group native to central Afghanistan] reveals that the same historical events may be understood in very different ways by different communities. We need to understand who is writing that history, who that history is being written about, and who is being overlooked.

Members of the Pashtun community pictured in the 1930s. The group was among those displaced by British imperial intervention in the 19th century

ME: What are the key, or indeed overlooked, events that help make sense of what's now happening in the country?

BO: An aspect which perhaps hasn't been looked at sufficiently is Afghanistan's efforts to develop a coherent and functional centralised state. You can see several incarnations of Afghan government since the foundation of the first Afghan empire in 1747, which was beset by a range of problems – not least that it struggled to generate governance or get people to pay taxes across a complex region. That led to instability, which is a problem you can see recurring throughout Afghanistan's history. In the 1880s and 1890s, its emir [ruler], Abdur Rahman Khan, killed tens of thousands of people in an attempt to use terror to generate strong governance. But it all fell apart because he could not integrate a wider infrastructure. I think it's possible to look back to that period as one in which some of the problems we see now started to arise.

WD: There have been far more periods in which Afghanistan has not had strong central control than periods in which it has. The Afghans are rather proud of the idea that there are tribal, village and local governments with just as much weight as central government. People who pledge their allegiance to central government won't necessarily obey it, and that's been a feature of its history from the very start. The first Brit to study Afghanistan, Mountstuart Elphinstone, wrote in 1815: "The internal government of the tribes answers its ends so well that the utmost disorders of the royal government never derange its operations, nor disturb the lives of the

THE PANEL

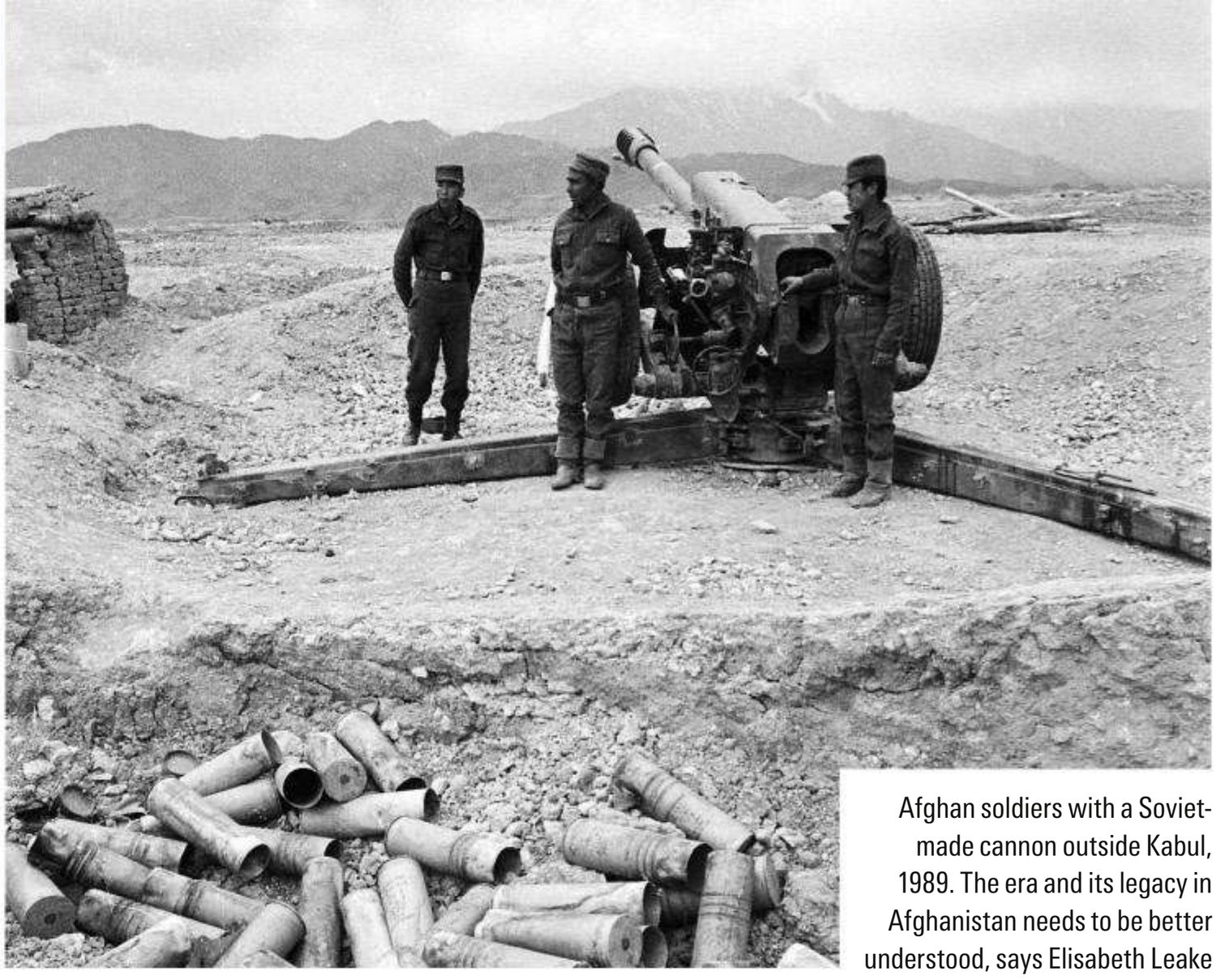
William Dalrymple
is a writer and historian whose books include *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* (Bloomsbury, 2019).

Rabia Latif Khan
is studying for a PhD at SOAS University in London, exploring the construction of ethnic identities within Afghanistan.

Elisabeth Leake
is associate professor at the University of Leeds and author of *Afghan Crucible: The Soviet Invasion and the Making of Modern Afghanistan*, to be published by OUP in 2022.

Bijan Omrani
is an honorary associate research fellow at the University of Exeter and author of *Afghanistan: A Companion and Guide* (Odyssey, 2005).

BRIDGEMAN



Afghan soldiers with a Soviet-made cannon outside Kabul, 1989. The era and its legacy in Afghanistan needs to be better understood, says Elisabeth Leake

people." Periods in which strong central control has kept the nation together, whether in a colonial or domestic form, are very rare.

EL: We need to pay better attention to events and developments from the 1960s through to the 1980s, and particularly to the civil war that emerged in Afghanistan in the late 1970s. I frame it as a civil war, not just a Soviet invasion, because there were so many other dynamics at play. What's really stood out recently is the number of comparisons between the United States' recent withdrawal from Afghanistan and its withdrawal from Vietnam in the 1970s, when a better and more nuanced comparison is to those events of the 1980s and the ways in which they shaped dynamics into the 21st century. Beyond a key group of scholars doing fantastic and important work on Afghanistan's history from the mid-20th century onward, I don't feel that it's a period that has been adequately explored or acknowledged.

ME: Afghanistan has been labelled the "graveyard of empires". Is that true, and, if so, what are the factors behind it?

WD: If you go back far enough, you can find evidence of many empires that ruled Afghanistan, or parts of it, perfectly successfully. The Kushan empire had its capital under what's now Bagram airbase [in the centre of the country], from where it ruled deep into India. There were various medieval and early modern dynasties, of which the most famous are the Lodis and the Mughals. So it's not that empires have not succeeded in Afghanistan, but that recent western colonial empires have struggled.

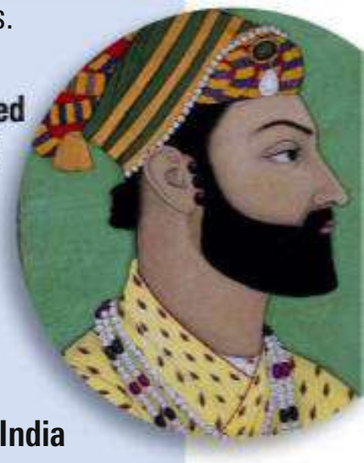
This ties in to Bijan's point about taxes: the real problem is that it's really difficult to fund the colonisation of Afghanistan. Despite the fact the East India Company was making a massive profit out of its operations in Bengal and Bihar, it suddenly went into the red when it invaded Afghanistan. Having to support a distant army, and build roads to transport food and weapons over vast distances with the entire Sikh army between you and your base, was an extremely expensive business.

Famously, the continual fighting in Afghanistan later also helped break the Soviet economy. And, bringing us up to the present, it wasn't that the Americans had been militarily defeated or couldn't carry on resisting the Taliban, but rather that the cost in money and body bags was deemed too high. So it's that expense, and difficulties in maintaining finances, that seems to cause these empires to come to grief rather than outright military impossibility.

> **"It's not the case that empires have not succeeded in Afghanistan, but that recent western colonial empires have struggled"**
>
> WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

TIMELINE AFGHANISTAN: 10 KEY MOMENTS

● **Seventh century AD** **The start of the Muslim conquests of Afghanistan**, which replaced a range of faiths including Buddhism and Hinduism and greatly influenced the culture and religion of the country over the following centuries.



● **1747** **Ahmad Shah Durrani (pictured right)**, often regarded as the founder of the modern state of Afghanistan, is appointed king. He reigns for 26 years, during which he extends his rule throughout the region.

● **1839** **The British empire and East India Company intervene** in a succession dispute between Shah Shujah, who they had installed in Kabul, and Dost Mohammad, sparking the **First Anglo-Afghan War**.

● **1842** **The war ends in defeat for the British empire** and the East India Company. It is the first skirmish in the "Great Game", Britain and Russia's struggle for control of central Asia.

● **1878** **The Second Anglo-Afghan War begins.** As a result of the conflict, Britain is able to take control of the nation's foreign policy and create a buffer zone between the British empire and Russia.

● **1880** **British-backed Abdur Rahman Khan becomes emir.** Although he unites Afghanistan, his rule is marked by despotism and violence, and as many as 100,000 people are executed on his command.

● **1919** **The Third Anglo-Afghan War** sees Afghanistan invade British India, ending in an armistice on 8 August. The conflict leads the Afghan people to gain independence and regain control of their foreign affairs from Britain.

● **1979** **Soviet forces invade Afghanistan** to support its communist government, which had come to power the previous year. The resulting guerrilla war with insurgent *mujahideen* groups (pictured right) lasts nine years and forces millions of Afghan people to leave their homes.

● **1989** **The withdrawal of Soviet forces sparks a series of civil wars** which run until 2001. The Taliban – a political, religious and military organisation – extends its control over almost three-quarters of Afghanistan.

● **2001** Following the 9/11 attacks on the United States, **a US-led coalition launches a bombing offensive in Afghanistan**.

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Women wearing burqas in a Kabul street market, 2009. Although regimes such as the Taliban have restricted women's rights, Elisabeth Leake argues that it's crucial not to overlook their role in Afghanistan's history

ME: Do we need to have a greater understanding of the British empire's involvement in this story?

BO: One of the long-term impacts that still has a huge presence today is the frontiers that Britain essentially imposed on Afghanistan in the late 19th century. Britain was responsible for the drawing of the northern frontier with the then-Russian empire, along the Amu Darya river, more commonly known in Britain as the Oxus. But more famously, the Durand Line – the 1,640-mile-long frontier between Pakistan and Afghanistan – was drawn up in 1893 with the very grudging co-operation of Abdur Rahman. He recognised that it would be good to have a clearly demarcated frontier between Afghanistan and the British empire, because he could then say: "I'm going to try and control my side of this with all of my might."

That frontier was drawn up to be convenient to British India's defence and, because it split groups of people in half, it has been a bone of contention between Afghanistan and its neighbour – British India, and then Pakistan – ever since. One of those groups is the Pashtun people, who see themselves as Afghanistan's foundational tribe because they had used their military power to conquer their neighbours and develop the state. They continue to feel that they need to be reunited.

People in Pakistan, meanwhile, have an existential fear of their nation being lost, or of Pashtun areas being reincorporated back into Afghanistan. That's always led to a very hostile attitude between the two nations. When Pakistan shut down that frontier in the 1960s, it left Afghanistan unable to export its goods and threw it into the arms of the Soviet Union – and it was from that period that Soviet influence began to develop very strongly in the country. So that lingering footprint of imperial impact – when Britain developed a frontier that was good militarily for its defence but no good for the surrounding nations – led to the events of the Soviet invasion and civil war of the 1980s.

RLK: Those tensions still regularly impact upon people and their livelihoods on both sides of the border. It's a key example of how the legacy of the British empire continues to have severe implications for people today.

EL: The legacy of British colonial framing of Afghan politics and society also meant that the word "tribe" was expanded beyond its original meaning of a certain type of kinship to have an increasingly pejorative association with a kind of backwards society incapable of governance or "civilisation". Indeed, the British imperial engagement with Afghanistan is one of the key reasons that we continue to talk about Afghanistan as "tribal" today.

Another aspect of this is that, because colonial officials placed so much emphasis on the ethnic Pashtuns they encountered, a great deal of historical narratives still focus on them. That's perhaps why both scholarship and popular discourse hasn't caught up to recognise the nation's fundamental diversity, and the multiple experiences and histories of other communities within it.

BO: Another way in which these power dynamics were felt is that, from the First Afghan War on, there was a sense in Afghanistan that it was hemmed in by western empires. There was the British empire – a non-Muslim empire – to the south and east; and the Russian empire – another non-Muslim empire – to the north. There was also a Shia Persian polity to the west, which was seen by the predominantly Sunni Afghans as being heretical, and which was under growing European influence in the late 19th century. So there was a feeling in Afghanistan, propagated by Abdur Rahman, that Afghanistan was the last true unconquered Islamic territory in the region. The response to that feeling was a developing isolation, and a fear of engaging with the technologies of the surrounding empires. That went on for a long time. Abdur Rahman didn't want to develop road or rail links because he thought they would make Afghanistan more attractive to invaders. He was similarly hesitant about bringing in new educational ideas, because he thought they would destabilise the order he'd managed to develop and the interpretation of Islam he was using to hold the nation together.

Of course, the isolation had also been developing partly due to the collapse of long-distance overland trade routes linking the nation to the wider world. This, again, was a consequence of growing western imperial networks directly linking India, China, Russia and Europe and missing out Afghanistan. But it all came together at a vital moment, and left Afghanistan feeling behind in terms of material development. It's been difficult to get over the idea that development necessarily equates to a threat to sovereignty.

ME: Are there groups of people in Afghanistan whose stories are either not told or which have been mistold?

RLK: There are definitely issues with how the dominant narratives of Afghanistan are discussed, and the place of the Hazara community within them. Abdur Rahman instigated a holy war against the Hazara

"It's been very hard for Afghanistan to get over the idea that development necessarily equates to a threat to its sovereignty"

BIJAN OMRANI

REUTERS

Two children from Afghanistan's Hazara community travel to their village in Bamiyan province, 2009. Rabia Latif Khan stresses the ways in which historical narratives still shape views of the community today

REUTERS

community that resulted in them being labelled as unruly, rebellious and disloyal – and that's a portrayal that's still common in accounts of Afghan history. When you dig deeper, you find that his soldiers had been raping Hazara women, and that there had been multiple engagements with the emir in an attempt to bring that to an end. But much of that story is ignored in dominant accounts, which portray the Hazara as a troublesome community unwilling to listen to their ruler. This has implications today, because when Hazara people talk about historic and current grievances they are often labelled as being insincere to the state.

BO: The Hazaras are a leading example of a group that has been oppressed as part of the Afghan state's attempts to centralise and portray itself as more ethnically and culturally coherent than it actually is. There are many others, too, such as the people of what's called Nuristan [a province in eastern Afghanistan].

WD: The deeper you go into any event in Afghan history, the more you find it has a completely different complexion when you look at it on a regional basis. British accounts of the First Anglo-Afghan War give an impression of a united Afghan resistance: an undifferentiated mass of "fanatics". But Afghan accounts of the uprising give completely different versions of what's happening and who's leading it, depending on who's writing, in which part of the country.

RLK: Something that often comes up in my discussions is the use of the terms "majorities" and "minorities". Most of the literature of Afghanistan's ethnic communities labels the Hazaras as making up 10 per cent of the country's population, when they themselves will say they make up 20 to 25 per cent – and groups perceived as "minorities" have less representation in governmental institutions. The recently announced Taliban cabinet, for instance, doesn't include a single Hazara. That also means there's no representation of followers of Shia Islam. It's a key example of how historical narratives have a direct impact on communities in Afghanistan today.

> **"Describing the ideologies of local Afghan leaders as "fundamentalism" is problematic and misleading"**
>
> ELISABETH LEAKE

ME: Under the Taliban, women's rights have been greatly curtailed. How much of an outlier is this in Afghanistan's past?

EL: Women have often been at the centre of debates about modernisation and development in Afghanistan. Some political organisations, including the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan in the 1970s and 1980s, placed women's rights high on their list of proposed reforms, although they had less success putting them into practice. Other groups have been more resistant to changing local social and gender dynamics.

A key thing to emphasise is the agency of Afghan women. Groups such as the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan have often led the conversation about different forms of female empowerment, and it's vital not just to think about Afghan women as the recipients or targets of government policy, but also as active negotiators in these processes. This continues to be the case today.

ME: Is it reductive to see religious fundamentalism as a key and recurring part of Afghanistan's history?

EL: Extremely. It provides a simplistic trope with which to dismiss religious, social and political dynamics within Afghanistan. Religion and Islam have played an important role in Afghan history, but not in any singular form. We should think about how local leaders used Islam to assert their standing within their communities, but to describe their ideologies and aspirations as "fundamentalism" is problematic and misleading.

WD: I agree, and that's true of much of the region. Western eyes often misinterpret a whole ragbag of different things as "religious fundamentalism". Many people in Afghanistan have felt, in recent years, that a small elite in Kabul was devouring the resources pouring in, and Taliban supporters now repeatedly talk about "justice" – the idea that there was no justice in the old regime other than that which could be bought. Whether or not one accepts that rhetoric,

there's no question that Islamic fundamentalism, as perceived from the west, is a small part of a much more complicated picture of grievances and motivating factors.

BO: Islam is part of a complex matrix of interlocking factors that make up people's identities and which they turn to in times of stress. You might have a local identity and an ethnic identity, with Islam on top as something you can draw on if you feel threatened – and which can be used as a unifying factor to motivate people to take up a cause.

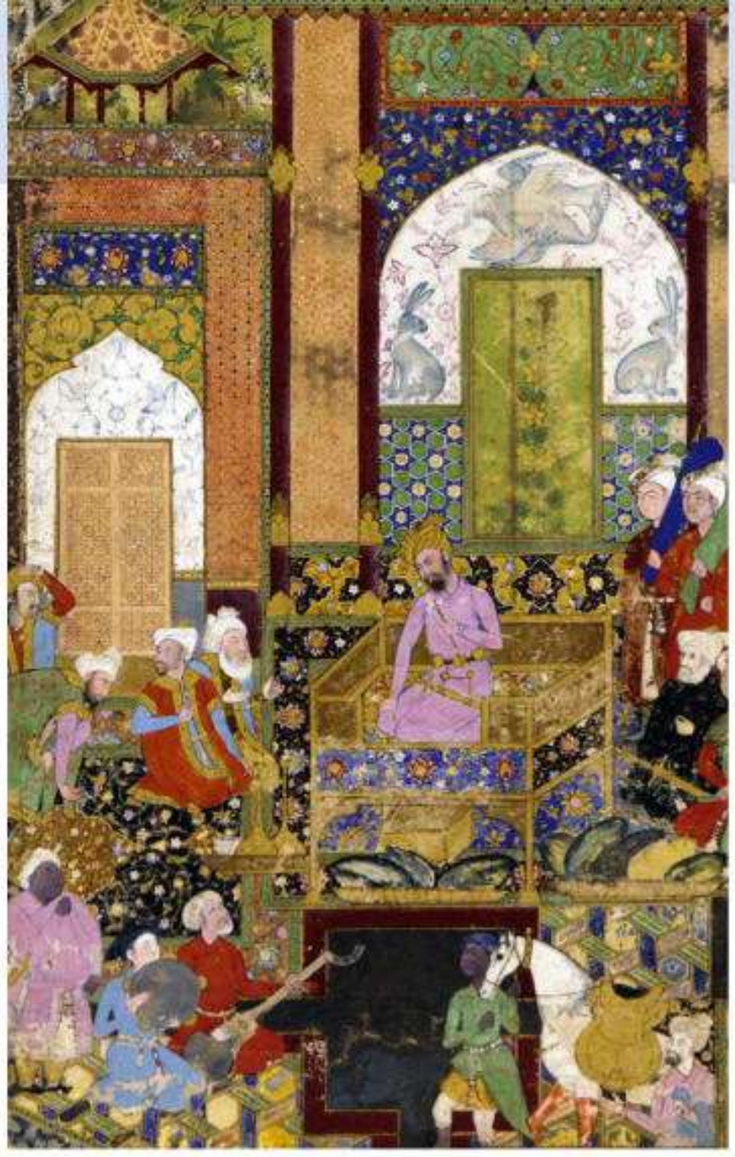
RLK: It's important to stress that the Taliban are only one segment of society, and don't represent the whole of Afghan society or thinking. We need to understand that Islam in Afghanistan is not a monolith, but that there are various Muslim communities – and also to acknowledge the country's pre-Islamic history, of which a lot of people aren't aware.

ME: Does the recent withdrawal of US troops, and the Taliban takeover, signal the end of the American century?

WD: It certainly adds to the impression that American influence is diminishing. China has been very active with the Taliban, which has now made three TV announcements describing the country as its best friend. China is talking about including Afghanistan in its Belt and Road project [to create overland and sea routes through central Asia and to the Middle East and Africa], too.

It's early days yet, and things may not work out as planned – as is often the case in Afghanistan. But there's a strong feeling that US influence over Afghanistan, and maybe Pakistan as well, is diminishing fast, and that China is replacing it as the principal ally of both nations. The Chinese have chosen a very different model to the US system of installing a puppet and trying to puppeteer a liberal democracy. They are offering to build infrastructure, and to become a major economic partner, in return for mineral extraction. The Mes Aynak mine [Afghanistan's largest copper deposit] is due to reopen, for instance. It may be a deal that the Afghans can live with.

There's no question that the rise of China's economy and influence is the principal global geopolitical change in our lifetime. The impression is that the past few weeks have sped up that process, reflected by news of a defensive pact between the US, the UK and Australia.



Babur presides over his court in this 16th-century depiction. The Mughal emperor's love of wine and poetry is "a great illustration of the richness and variety of Afghan history", says Bijan Omrani

> **"We need to understand that Islam in Afghanistan is not a monolith, but that there are various Muslim communities"**
>
> RABIA LATIF KHAN

A depiction of the Buddha from a monastery in Paitava, near what's now Bagram. Afghanistan's pre-Islamic history is often overlooked, argues Rabia Latif Khan

ME: When people read headlines about Afghanistan, what stories from its history would you like them to keep in mind?

EL: There are so many histories of Afghanistan yet to be told. I'm keen to re-emphasise the fact that Afghanistan, particularly in the 20th century, has a fundamentally global history. I don't mean that in terms of a so-called "graveyard of empires", but in the fact that Afghan political elites and intellectuals have always thought and acted globally. Afghanistan was a member of the League of Nations, an early joiner of the United Nations, and an active member of other major international political organisations.

It's important to recognise that, especially in the 20th century, Afghanistan was not an outlier to the international system. It sat alongside other Afro-Asian countries, both in the fight against colonialism and in international discourses about human and national rights. The fundamentally modern aspirations of many Afghan people and communities have also been overlooked, which serves to re-emphasise instead narratives of Afghanistan as somehow exceptional. We need to question that exceptionalism, and further reintegrate Afghanistan's past into our modern thinking and wider histories of both the 20th century and the region.

BO: Until the 1980s, Afghanistan was a wine-producing country – and perhaps the greatest fan of Afghan wine was Babur, who founded the Mughal empire in the 16th century. The image of him sitting in his beloved gardens in Kabul, drinking wine and improvising poetry, is a great illustration of the richness and variety of Afghan history. So, too, is the fact that one of Afghanistan's biggest Islamic colleges was founded [in the 15th century] by a woman, Gawhar Shad, and it was under female patronage that Islamic scholarship flourished. Together, those vignettes show us that Islam in Afghanistan isn't bearded men telling people to stop doing things, but that it has long been creative, artistic and spiritual, full of dance and music and philosophy. That's something that needs to be remembered as much by the Taliban and in Afghanistan as it does outside of the country. H

LISTEN Afghans discuss their country's future in the recent BBC World Service series: **A Wish for Afghanistan**
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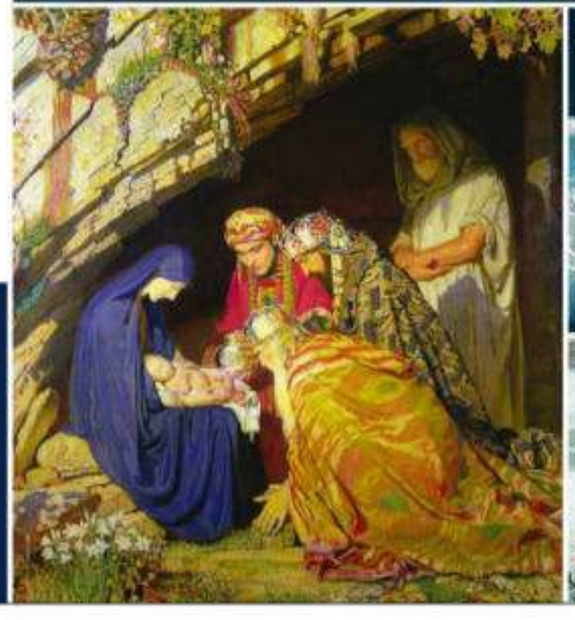

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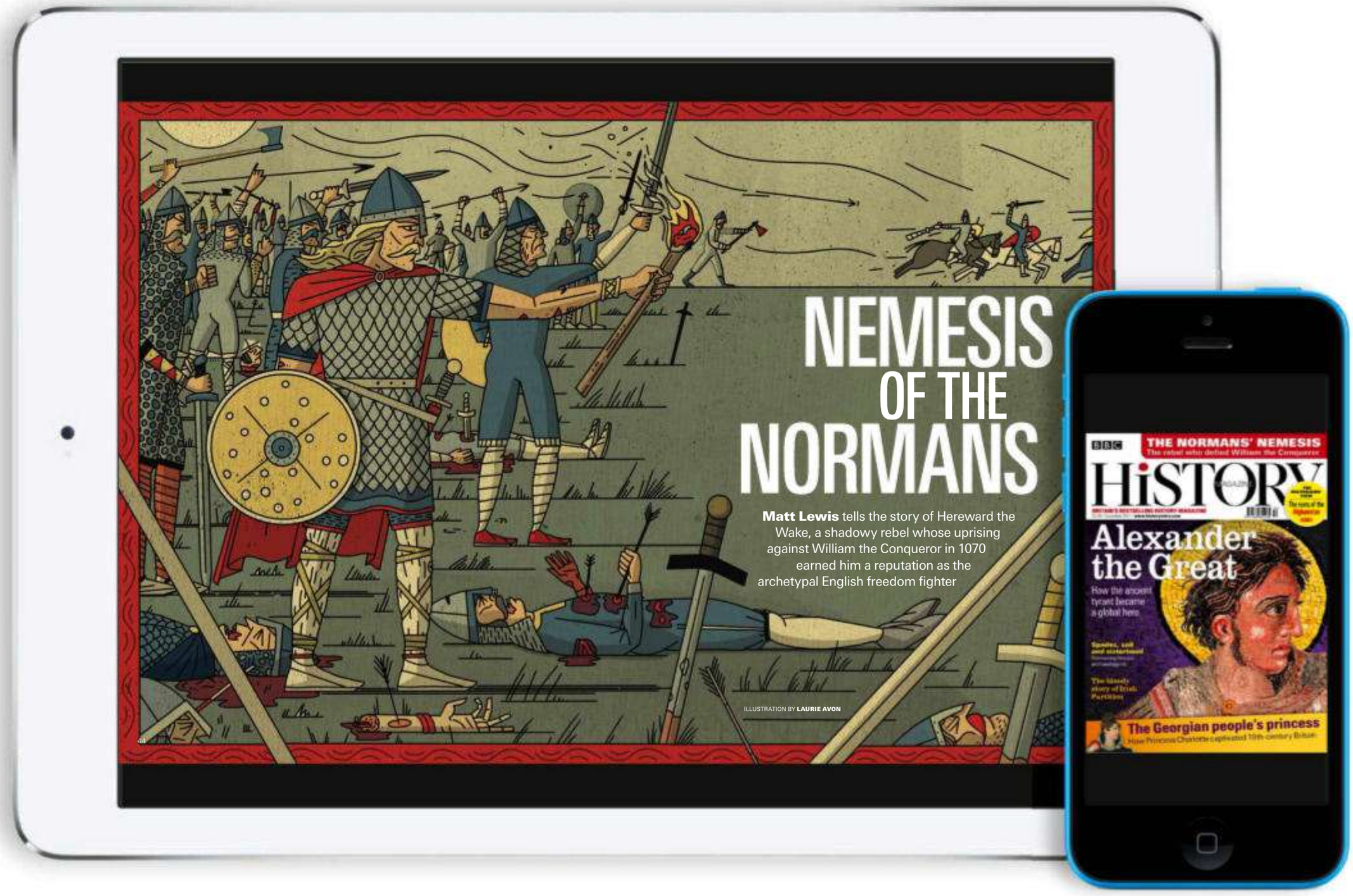
NEMESIS OF THE NORMANS
Matt Lewis tells the story of Hereward the Wake, a shadowy rebel whose uprising against William the Conqueror in 1070 earned him a reputation as the archetypal English freedom fighter
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Beloved figure
A portrait of Princess Charlotte, c1816–18. Unlike her father, the playboy prince regent who was crowned George IV, she enjoyed immense popularity

The Original People's Princess

Georgian Britain declared Princess Charlotte of Wales to be the country's glory and Europe's hope – so her untimely death horrified the nation, prompting fears the monarchy would collapse. **Tracy Borman** reflects on her tragic life

When news broke that the beautiful, charismatic and wildly popular princess had tragically died, it sparked an outpouring of public anguish on a scale never seen before in Britain. The nation was plunged into mourning as people tried to come to terms with the shock of losing a princess who had captured their hearts from the moment she had appeared on the royal scene. But grief soon turned to retribution, and the monarchy's public image plummeted. Suddenly, this centuries-old institution looked as if it was at risk of losing all support from its subjects.

Sound familiar? To anyone born in the 1980s or earlier, it will be. But the princess in question wasn't Diana, the late, estranged wife of Prince Charles, who died in a car accident in Paris in 1997. She was Charlotte of Wales, the only child of the debauched prince regent, later George IV, and she died in 1817 at the age of just 21. Although her passing shook the nation and brought the crown to its knees, during the intervening two centuries Charlotte has largely been forgotten. Yet her death would prove a pivotal moment in the history of the British monarchy.

Playboy prince

Charlotte Augusta was born at Carlton House, her father Prince George's lavish London home, on 7 January 1796. George was the eldest of King George III's 15 children, and his daughter Charlotte was his only child, which made her second in line to the throne. The young princess soon came to be seen as a bright hope for the future, in stark contrast to her profligate and licentious father.

"Prinny", as he was known to his friends, was the ultimate playboy prince. Described by one contemporary as "a libertine over head and ears in debt and disgrace", he himself admitted to being "rather too fond of wine and women". King George III complained bitterly about the "unruly passions" of his eldest son and grimly predicted that "every absurdity and impropriety may be expected".

He was right. By 1795, Prince George's debts had spiralled to a staggering £630,000 (equivalent to perhaps £48m). At a time when Britain was fighting a cripplingly expensive war with Napoleonic France, the prospect of a government bailout was slim. Instead, in a deliberate side-swipe at the profligate prince, the government introduced a new tax on hair powder, knowing it would hit George and his foppish friends where it hurt.

To resolve the gathering crisis, the Prince of Wales reluctantly admitted that there was nothing else for it but to break with his secret wife, Maria Fitzherbert (whom the king had barred him from marrying because she was a Roman Catholic, so their "marriage" was never legal) and marry a wealthy princess. The unfortunate candidate was his cousin, a German princess named Caroline of Brunswick. They hated each other on sight but were married in April 1795 and conceived a child on their wedding night – possibly their only conjugal encounter.

ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN

Family ties
Princess Charlotte and her mother, Princess Caroline, in a 1919 image. They enjoyed a very close bond, unlike Charlotte and her father

When Charlotte was only a day old her father vowed to separate her from her mother forever. Just four months later, her parents split and their ongoing animosity would dominate her childhood. The tiny princess was established in a household of her own, although she visited her parents every week at their respective homes. She also spent time with her grandparents, King George and Queen Charlotte, and the latter praised her young namesake as being "blessed with an uncommon share of good sense".

Hanoverian hostility

Charlotte grew into a warm-hearted and affectionate girl, capable of forming strong attachments to those who treated her kindly. Pretty, fair-haired and high-spirited, she captured hearts wherever she went – although her own father's wasn't one of them. Perhaps she reminded Prince George too much of his estranged wife, or perhaps he was upholding the Hanoverian tradition of hostility between a future monarch and their heir.

As a result, Charlotte grew much closer to her mother, who showered her daughter with the affection that she craved. Caroline was hardly a perfect maternal figure, however. There were rumours that she had taken various lovers and had even had a child by one of them. "My mother was wicked," Charlotte later reflected, "but she would not have turned so wicked had not my father been much more wicked still."

Increasingly concerned for his only legitimate grandchild, with whom he had formed a close bond, from 1804 George III began to play a greater role in his granddaughter's upbringing. He appointed Lady De Clifford as Charlotte's governess, and she introduced an extensive curriculum that included Latin, history, drawing and music. The princess was not always a model pupil. "We had a few sour grapes between us," Charlotte admitted after one quarrel, "but before we had finished our contest, I made her swallow them all." She did, though, excel in the subjects she enjoyed, becoming an accomplished pianist and horsewoman.

As she entered her teenage years, the princess's rebellious streak grew more pronounced. Lady De Clifford complained about her charge's tendency to let her ankle-length underdrawers show under her dresses, and one of her mother's ladies-in-waiting observed that Charlotte rarely chose to "put on dignity". It was said that she identified with Marianne, the headstrong and wayward heroine of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Yet the princess enjoyed immense popularity with the public – a lively, personable and apparently virtuous young woman, providing a welcome contrast to her "mad" grandfather, George III, and her profligate father, the prince regent – and was met with cheering crowds wherever she went.

This stoked her father's jealousy, and when he was appointed prince regent in 1811 upon his father's final descent into "madness", he used his new powers to impose harsh restrictions on his daughter's lifestyle. This included a paltry clothing allowance and obliging her to spend most of her time with maiden aunts at Windsor.

I shall go the way our brave Sailors do!
so take care of my petticoates, Captain!
and Chair the Bishop!!!
Is not SHE a SPUNKY one_or The Princess and the Bishop.

Unruly pupil Princess Charlotte flees from her tutor in this c1816 engraving. Although she did not always commit herself to her studies, she excelled in subjects she was passionate about, such as music and horse riding

GETTY IMAGES

Power couple
Princess Charlotte sits with her husband, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. Ardently in love, their union saw the princess's popularity soar to even greater heights

The prince also limited Charlotte's contact with his estranged wife. Caroline's behaviour had grown ever more shocking since their separation. In one particularly infamous episode in 1813, she locked their 16-year-old daughter in a bedroom with a suitor and told the pair to amuse themselves.

Inappropriate infatuations

Charlotte needed little encouragement: her head was filled with romance, and she became infatuated with a number of inappropriate suitors, including the illegitimate sons of two of her uncles. Although he was hardly a shining example of morality himself, the prince regent appreciated the need to find a suitable husband for his daughter. He was also motivated by a desire to secure Britain an ally in the war against Napoleon.

His first choice was Prince William of Orange. But the Dutch suitor made a poor first impression when introduced to his prospective bride in August 1813 by getting drunk. Charlotte hated the idea of living in Holland after the marriage and argued that a future British queen should not marry a foreigner – something that chimed with the views of her father's subjects. To the prince regent's fury, she eventually broke off the engagement. "No arguments, no threats, shall ever bend me to marry this detested Dutchman," she declared.

Prince George retaliated by dismissing all of his daughter's servants and confining her to a life of isolation at Cranbourne Lodge in Windsor Forest. Her mother was forbidden from visiting and, to Charlotte's deep distress, she left the country soon afterwards, never to see her daughter again.

But Caroline's absence eased relations between the princess and her father, and in August 1814 he allowed her a visit to Weymouth. By now, public sympathy with the persecuted princess had reached fever pitch. Wherever her coach stopped along the way, huge crowds turned out to cheer her. Upon her arrival in Weymouth, she was greeted with spectacular illuminations with a centrepiece declaring: "Hail Princess Charlotte, Europe's Hope and Britain's Glory."

In early 1815, Charlotte turned her thoughts to a new suitor. Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld ("the Leo", as she called him) was five years her senior and, as a dashing soldier in the Napoleonic Wars, fulfilled her romantic ideals perfectly. With the help of intermediaries, she made contact with Leopold and found him amenable. Her father was a good deal less keen, however, and it took months of earnest persuasions before he agreed to invite the prince to Britain.

In February 1816, the prince regent hosted a dinner for Leopold and his daughter at Brighton, after which a rapturous Charlotte enthused: "I find him [Leopold] charming, and go to bed happier than I have ever done yet in my life… I am certainly a very fortunate creature, & have to bless God. A Princess never, I believe, set out in life (or married) with such prospects of happiness, real domestic ones like other people." The prince regent was no less impressed and told his daughter that her suitor "had every qualification to make a woman happy".

The couple's engagement was announced to great rejoicing in the House of Commons on 14 March 1816. Enormous crowds gathered to celebrate their wedding at Carlton House on 2 May that year. They were dazzled by the sight of Princess Charlotte's sumptuous wedding dress, made from cloth of silver and costing £10,000 (the gown still survives today and is part of the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection at Hampton Court Palace). The only mishap during the ceremony occurred when Charlotte was heard to giggle at her impoverished groom's promise to endow her with all his worldly goods.

Princess Charlotte was delighted with her new husband, whom she declared to be "the perfection of a lover". Leopold was equally besotted. "Except when I went out to shoot, we were together always," he recalled, "and we *could* be together, we did not tire." The prince proved a steadying influence on his young wife, and when she became too excited he would quietly urge: "*Doucement, chérie*" ("Gently, my love"). The Coburgs, as they were known, became a popular fixture on the London social scene. Their public appearances prompted wild applause and the singing of 'God Save the King'.

Public interest in the couple reached fever pitch when Charlotte's pregnancy was announced in April 1817. Although she had suffered an earlier miscarriage, Leopold told his father-in-law that this time there was every hope that she would carry the baby to full term. Economists predicted that the birth of a princess would raise the stock market by 2.5 per cent and a prince by 6 per cent.

Calamitous labour

The baby was due on 19 October, but it was not until 3 November that Charlotte's labour pains began. Sir Richard Croft superintended the birth. He encouraged her to exercise but would not let her eat. Two days later, the princess had still not given birth and fears were expressed that she would not be able to do so naturally. An obstetrician was sent for, but Croft refused to allow him entry; neither did he consent to the use of forceps – both of which had tragic repercussions.

Finally, at nine o'clock on the evening of 5 November, 50 hours after her labour had begun, Charlotte gave birth to a large stillborn boy. Efforts to resuscitate him were in vain. The exhausted princess received the news calmly, stating that it was the will of God. Her distraught husband, who had been in attendance throughout, took an opiate and collapsed into bed.

But soon after midnight, Charlotte began complaining of pains in her abdomen and vomited violently. By the time Croft arrived, he found his patient bleeding heavily and cold to the touch, her breathing laboured. Before her husband Leopold could be roused from his sleep, the princess was dead.

Wherever Charlotte's coach stopped, huge crowds cheered for her. She was declared Europe's hope and Britain's glory

BRIDGEMAN

Parallel lives

Tracy Borman reveals the similarities between Princess Charlotte and Princess Diana

Princess Charlotte in 1807. Her childhood was marred by her parents' frequent public rows, but from a young age she was a hit with the British people

CHILDHOOD Warring parents led to years of misery

Charlotte: Charlotte's parents' marriage was one of convenience. The relationship got off to a disastrous start. Upon meeting Caroline, George fled from the room in horror, leaving his prospective bride to reflect: "I think he's very fat, and he's nothing as handsome as his portrait."

They separated almost immediately, but not before George had got his new wife pregnant. Charlotte's birth drove a further wedge between the couple, and the very public spats between the "warring Waleses" blighted the princess's childhood.

Diana: Diana was the third daughter of John Spencer, Viscount Althorp and Frances née Roche. Her parents had hoped for a boy, and the increasingly pressing desire for an heir added strain to their relationship. The birth of their son, Charles, in 1964 failed to save the Spencers' marriage, and they divorced in 1969.

Diana's parents both remarried, and Earl Spencer won custody of the children. Diana had a difficult relationship with her stepmother, Raine, Countess of Dartmouth and reflected that her childhood had been "very unhappy".

PUBLIC OPINION Their popularity soared above the other royals

Charlotte: From a young age, Charlotte captured the nation's hearts. Her innocence provided a welcome contrast to her petulant father and to her scandalous mother. Like Diana, she did not fit the mould of a typical princess, and as she grew to maturity, she won even greater popularity for her informality and spontaneity.

Huge crowds gathered to witness her every public appearance, and her marriage served to intensify the level of interest in her. In common with the later princess of Wales, Charlotte seemed to represent a bright new future for the monarchy.

Diana: From the moment Lady Diana Spencer was first mooted as a potential bride for Prince Charles, she became a figure of intense public interest. Soon, she was the most photographed woman in the world – the royal family's own global superstar.

After their wedding in 1981, the Prince and Princess of Wales were hailed by *Time* magazine as "the most glamorous couple on Earth", but Diana's popularity far exceeded that of her husband. Her glamour, charm and informality shone an unflattering light on the Windsors, who appeared stiffly formal and staid by comparison.

DEATH Intense public mourning boiled over into outrage

Charlotte: Princess Charlotte's death prompted an unprecedented wave of public grief. "England, that great country, has lost everything in losing my ever beloved daughter," lamented her mother, Caroline. Tributes poured in from across the globe. Charlotte was buried in St George's Chapel, Windsor, and a monument was erected at her tomb, by public subscription.

But grief soon turned to retribution. The prince regent was accused of showing inadequate sorrow at the loss of his daughter and was even held responsible for her death. And the backlash against Sir Richard Croft, who had superintended the princess's ill-fated labour, led to his suicide a few months later.

Diana: Few events in British history have prompted the scale of national dismay that followed the death of Princess Diana in a car crash in Paris on 31 August 1997. An estimated 1.3 million floral tributes were placed at the gates of Buckingham and Kensington palaces.

Diana's funeral eclipsed her wedding in the level of public interest it generated. Held in Westminster Abbey, it was attended by around 2,000 guests, with an estimated 2.5 billion worldwide watching the television broadcasts. Grief turned to anger, most of which was directed against the royal family – for failing to lower the flag at Buckingham Palace to half mast, and at the Queen's decision to remain at Balmoral rather than returning to London.

A c1817 memorial brooch for Princess Charlotte. Although she was hugely popular, she was soon eclipsed by Queen Victoria

LEGACY Predictions the monarchy would crumble proved false

Charlotte: The deaths of both princesses sparked predictions that the monarchy would fall. This was perhaps more valid in Charlotte's case, given that she had been George III's only legitimate grandchild. In fact, her death would save the monarchy by prompting her "wicked" uncles, George III's younger sons, to make respectable marriages in order to produce an heir to the throne.

The one who succeeded was the fourth son, Edward, Duke of Kent, whose new wife, Victoria, gave birth to "a pretty little princess" in May 1819. Christened Alexandrina Victoria, but known by her second name, she rescued the monarchy from the abyss and ruled over an empire "on which the sun never set".

Diana: "I for one believe that there are lessons to be drawn from her life and from the extraordinary and moving reaction to her death," the Queen declared during a broadcast to the nation a week after Diana's demise. Although there was some effort on the part of the Windsors to mirror the late princess's example – tea in a Glasgow housing association bungalow, and so on – it was far from the seismic shift that some had predicted.

Instead, Diana might be compared to other estranged royals who shook the monarchy to its core during their lifetime, but whose long-term impact proved minimal. But her legacy differs from theirs in one crucial respect: she left behind progeny who will one day inherit the throne.

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Princess Diana, pictured three days before her wedding to Prince Charles in 1981. Her husband may have been the heir to the throne, but Diana was more popular than him

Mourners grieve for Princess Diana outside Buckingham Palace. Both her and Princess Charlotte's deaths devastated Britons

National tragedy An 1817 illustration shows Leopold comforting Princess Charlotte shortly before her death. Her demise following the delivery of her stillborn son threw Britain into mourning

"Two generations gone… in a moment!" lamented Charlotte's grief-stricken widower. "My Charlotte is gone from the country – it has lost her." His devastation was mirrored by people at all levels of society. Never before in the history of the British monarchy had there been such heartfelt and widespread mourning for the death of one of its members. "It really was as though every household throughout Great Britain had lost a favourite child," reflected the statesman Henry Brougham.

The entire kingdom went into deep mourning for several weeks. Linen drapers ran out of black cloth, and even the homeless went about wearing black armbands. Eventually, the makers of ribbons and other fancy goods (which could not be worn during the period of mourning) petitioned the government to shorten the period, fearing they would go out of business. It was as if normal life had suddenly ground to a halt. Every shop in Britain closed its doors for two weeks, as did the Royal Exchange, the Law Courts and the docks. Even the gambling dens were closed on the day of Charlotte's funeral. The prince regent was so prostrate with grief that he was unable to attend.

While the public continued to mourn their beloved princess, Charlotte's death sparked a competition among George III's younger sons to produce an heir. Thus far, none of them had shown much inclination to marry, preferring the company of their mistresses. Quickest off the mark was the king's fourth son, Edward, Duke of Kent, who wed a German princess, Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, in May 1818, when he was 50 years old. A year later,

Normal life suddenly ground to a halt: every shop closed its doors, and even the gambling dens shut on the day of Charlotte's funeral

she gave birth to a princess at Kensington Palace: the future Queen Victoria. As she grew to maturity, Princess Victoria enjoyed as much popularity as Charlotte had in her heyday, and by the time she became queen in 1837, memories of her tragic cousin had all but faded from public memory. It seems that in the story of the Hanoverian monarchy, there was only room for one heroine. H

Tracy Borman's book, *Crown & Sceptre: A New History of the British Monarchy from William the Conqueror to Elizabeth II*, will be published by Hodder & Stoughton on 4 November. In January she'll be presenting a HistoryExtra masterclass on the monarchy: *historyextra.com/events*

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Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts

Where was Doggerland?

Where there is now the North Sea, for much of the past million years there was dry land: Doggerland. For almost 950,000 years, it was a rich land at the heart of Europe and home to our distant ancestors – early hominids such as *Homo antecessor* and Neanderthals – and eventually people like us. Today it is one of the largest and most important archaeological sites in the world.

Due to natural climate-change cycles, Doggerland repeatedly emerged from the sea as land ice formed, only to flood again as the Earth warmed up. During ice ages, people could walk from the continent to England across a vast steppe where massive rivers flowed, home to woolly mammoths, herds of reindeer and horses, and also cave lions and hyenas. In warmer periods, people would move away as the ice caps melted and Doggerland flooded.

During the last glacial period, Neanderthals left Doggerland and never returned. Modern humans did. As the climate warmed, our ancestors lived well in forests, wetlands and coastal areas that provided abundant resources. But over time Doggerland slowly drowned again, and was lost beneath the waves some 8,000 years ago.

Amazingly, fossils and artefacts from Doggerland can still be found beneath the North Sea, in fish nets and washed up on the English and Dutch coasts. Avid citizen scientists comb these beaches, collecting everything from flint handaxes made by Neanderthals, to mammoth teeth, to hundreds of bone and antler arrowheads used by modern humans – giving us tantalising glimpses into this lost world.

Dr Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof, historian and writer who works as the Overdressed Archeologist and is associated with the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities

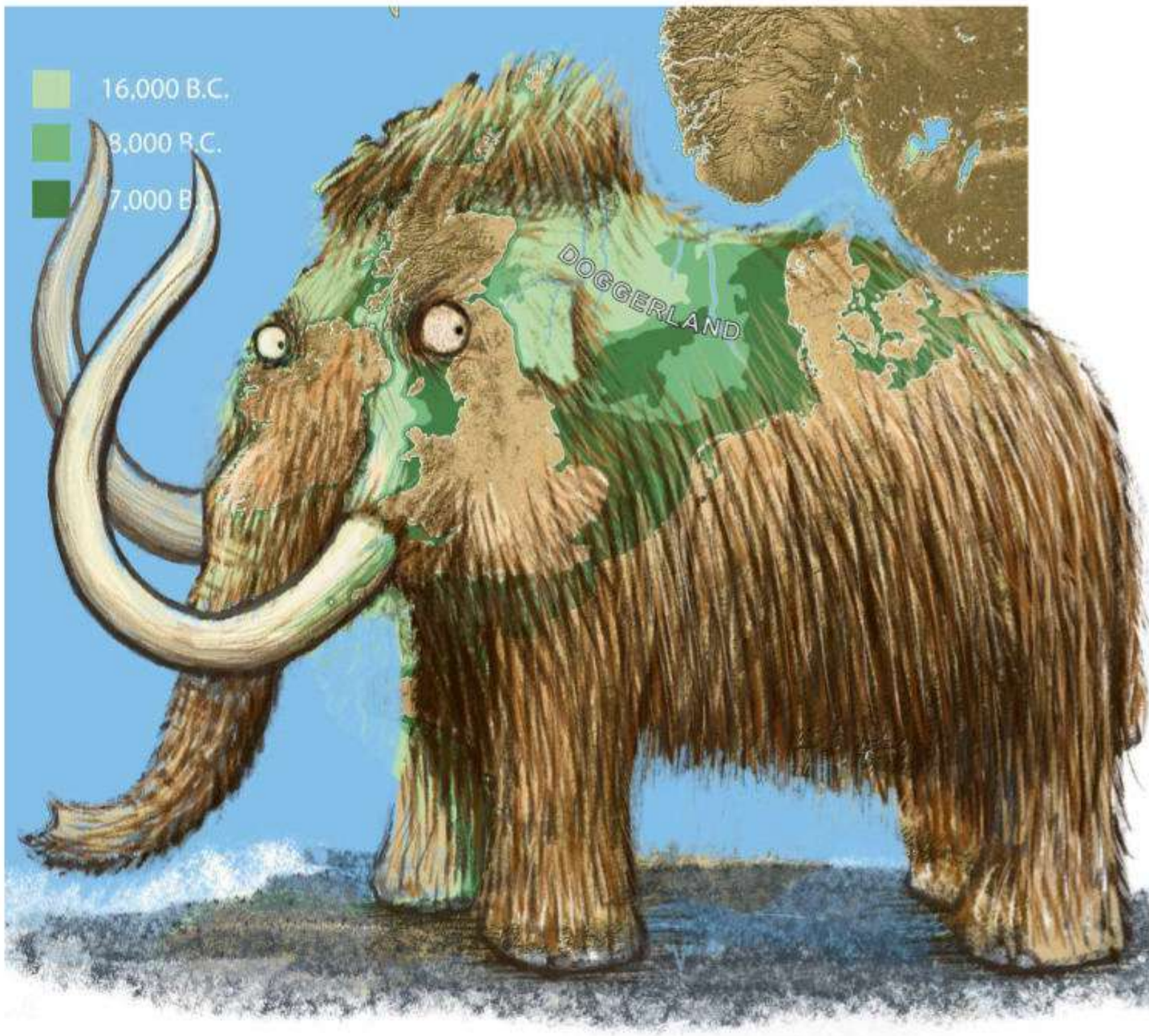


ILLUSTRATION BY **@GLENMCILLUSTRATION**

The Australian government's decision to employ machine-gun-toting troops to cull its emu population backfired spectacularly

What was the Great Emu War?

During the Depression, farmers in Western Australia were hit by falling prices, and by emus devouring their crops.

The Australian government had failed to deliver promised farm subsidies and feared Western Australia might demand independence. Under pressure to do something – and be *seen* to be doing something – it followed suggestions from First World War veterans and in 1932 sent troops to resolve the emu problem with machine guns.

The birds, alas, failed to comply with their anticipated extermination. Scattering and running when the soldiers appeared, they were difficult targets and relatively few were killed.

While the emus' feasting continued, furious farmers were presented with bills for soldiers' food and accommodation, and for thousands of rounds of uselessly expended ammo. What the press dubbed "The (Great) Emu War" did, however, give everyone else a laugh.

A later system – a bounty paid for each dead bird – worked. Aimed single shots from half-competent marksmen trumped inexperienced young soldiers with Lewis guns.

Eugene Byrne, author and journalist specialising in history

ALAMY

Men from the Royal Army Ordnance Corps look at demob suits, June 1945. These garments were the first suits many ex-servicemen had ever owned

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

What constituted a "demob suit"?

Robin Howell, Essex

When British servicemen completed their military service at the end of the Second World War, they went to a demobilisation centre to be "demobbed". Part of that process involved exchanging their uniforms for a set of civilian clothes, which included two shirts, a hat, a tie, a pair of shoes and the famous "demob suit", which could either be a double-breasted pinstripe three-piece suit or a single-breasted jacket with flannel trousers. Most of these suits were manufactured by Leeds clothiers, with the Burtons company alone making about a third of all the suits to be produced.

There was no female version. Servicewomen were instead given a cash sum, and – because clothing was still rationed – extra ration coupons to enable them to buy the clothes of their choice.

While some servicemen commented that they were simply exchanging one uniform for another, a large selection of fabric choices was in fact available, with suits in shades of brown and blue and a variety of pinstripe colours.

Reactions to the suits were mixed: some thought the styling old fashioned, while those used to bespoke tailoring disliked the fact that the suits came ready to wear. But for many ex-servicemen, the demob suit was the first suit they had ever owned. One thing the suits did have in their favour was that they were exempt from wartime austerity measures which, for example, restricted the number of pockets and banned turn-ups. As JB Priestley commented, the man in a demob suit was quite literally "a cut above the rest of us".

Julian Humphrys, military historian and battlefield guide

DID YOU KNOW...?

Bottled up

In January 1749, an advertisement appeared in London newspapers announcing that a performer at the Haymarket Theatre would insert himself into a standard-sized wine bottle, and "any person may handle it". Many turned up to witness this spectacle – but the so-called "Bottle Conjuror" trumpeted by the advertisement didn't. Robbed of their entertainment, the audience rioted, ripping up the seating and lighting a bonfire outside the theatre.

A 1749 illustration of the "Bottle Conjuror" (left), who claimed he could fit into a wine bottle

Horrible hang-over

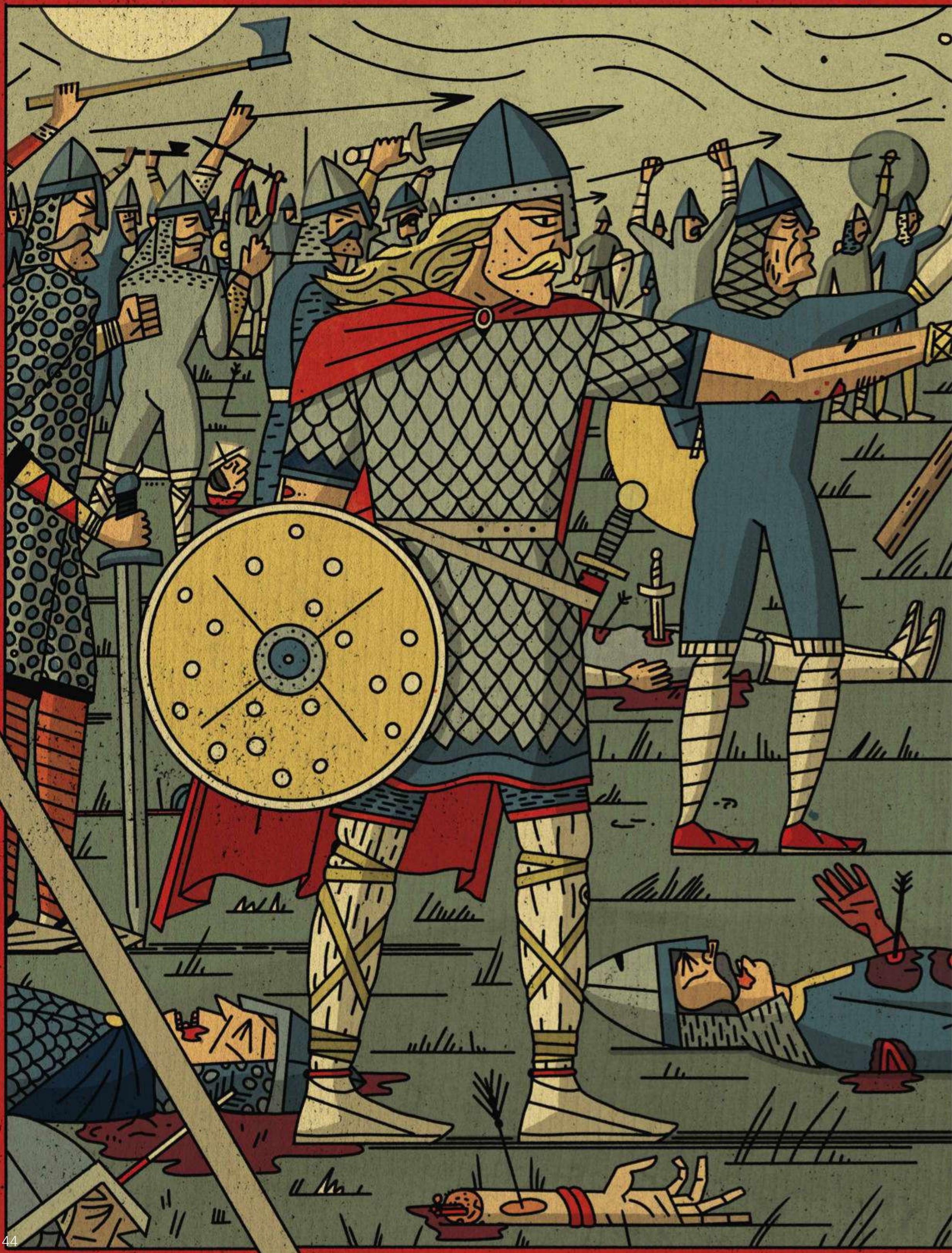
A 19th-century hangman was once so inebriated on the scaffold that he fell through the trapdoor alongside those he was executing. William Curry was York's hangman for three decades. In September 1821 he was scheduled to hang five men at the same time. According to a local newspaper, he was staggering with drink and "not keeping sufficiently clear of the drop, when the bolt was pulled, he fell along with the malefactors". Curry survived, albeit with severe bruises.

Shot down in flames

In the early 20th century, pistol duelling was demonstrated as a sport during the Olympic Games. This was not as life-threatening as one might think. At the so-called Intercalated Games of 1906 (not now recognised as an official Olympic event), competitors shot at plaster dummies dressed in frock coats. In a demonstration staged during the 1908 Games in London, they donned special protective clothing and fired wax bullets at one another. Unsurprisingly, pistol duelling never became an acknowledged Olympic sport. H

Nick Rennison, writer and journalist specialising in history

A duellist takes aim in 1909. Pistol duelling never became an accepted Olympic sport



NEMESIS OF THE NORMANS

Matt Lewis tells the story of Hereward the Wake, a shadowy rebel whose uprising against William the Conqueror in 1070 earned him a reputation as the archetypal English freedom fighter

ILLUSTRATION BY **LAURIE AVON**

Hereward the Wake's rebellion

Hero for the ages An early 20th-century depiction of Hereward the Wake during his attack on Peterborough. His escapades enchanted generations of English writers and artists

Looming over the land from her perch atop Norman siegeworks, a witch chanted an evil spell. Employed by supporters of William the Conqueror, she had been charged with helping to smoke out a band of rebels secreted nearby on the Isle of Ely – at the time, a spit of land surrounded by swampy fens in what's now Cambridgeshire – in an attempt to quell an English uprising.

Cursing the inhabitants of the isle, she turned her back before repeating her incantation twice more. Suddenly a deafening crack rang out – not, though, the result of the witch's spell taking effect but instead the sound of a fire set by the rebels, hidden in the marshes surrounding the Norman troops. As the heat and noise intensified, panic spread among the besiegers and the witch tumbled to her death: "smitten by fear as if by a whirlwind, she fell from on high", reported a 12th-century English chronicle, the *Liber Eliensis*. "And thus she who had come for the infliction of death upon other people, herself perished first, dead from a broken neck."

The *Liber Eliensis*'s version of this particular episode in the English rebellion of 1070–71 is, no doubt, heavily embellished. But there's one fact that's beyond dispute: such a setback was an unfamiliar experience for William the Conqueror. Just a few years earlier, the Norman duke had won the crown of England in battle. He had then brutally put down a revolt in the north, scarring the region for generations. "Never," complained the monk Orderic Vitalis, "did William commit so much cruelty; to his lasting disgrace, he yielded to his worst impulse, and set no bounds to his fury, condemning the innocent and the guilty to a common fate."

Despite several rebellions, the Conqueror seemed unstoppable. Yet here was an uprising successfully defying the new king, led by an effective and belligerent opponent. As William rode away from the siege of Ely in frustration, one man must have haunted his thoughts: Hereward.

Rebel, exile, outlaw

Hereward is most popularly known as "the Wake", an epithet that emerged in the 13th century. "Wake" might have meant "the Watchful", or it may be a mark of attempts by the Wake family of Lincolnshire to claim Hereward as a figure in their family history.

Hereward appears in several sources, including the Crowland Chronicle (hailing from the abbey of Crowland in Lincolnshire), the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the *Liber Eliensis*. There's also a biography, the *Gesta Herewardi* (*The Exploits of Hereward*), believed to date from the 12th century and probably compiled from various sources.

Why was Hereward deemed worthy of a biography? Why might the Wake family have been so eager to tether their name to his? The answer is that he was a rebel, an exile, an outlaw – and a thorn in the side of King William. His is an astonishing tale of a young man who would defy the Norman conquerors of England. These acts of defiance in the face of a determined and ruthless enemy made Hereward an Anglo-Saxon hero, celebrated by generations of medieval chroniclers as a fierce warrior, a gifted tactician, the archetypal English freedom fighter.

Sometimes the tale is a little *too* astonishing – and attempting to tease the fact from the fiction in the various sources that relate his escapades is an exercise in frustration. After all, such chronicles often include flights of artistic (and, indeed, diplomatic and political) licence. However, the fact that Hereward existed, and that he played a role in one of the most celebrated acts of resistance against William the Conqueror, is in little doubt.

Hereward was in exile when the Conquest of 1066 took place, as the result of a bust-up with his own father. Hereward was, we're told, a poor loser in local wrestling matches and, as the Crowland Chronicle grumbles, would "very often obtain with the sword that which by the mere strength of his arm he was unable". By the time he was 18, Hereward's father was fed up with his son's "acts of excessive violence against his neighbours". So he took the drastic step of asking Edward the Confessor to banish Hereward – and the king obliged.

The *Gesta Herewardi* details the young man's exploits as an exile in some detail. It tells us how Hereward travelled to Cornwall, where he saved a princess from a forced marriage to the local tyrant, Ulcus Ferreus – "Iron Sore" – and killed the would-be groom in a duel. Fleeing to Ireland, he joined the king's forces in a war against a rival the *Gesta* named only as the Duke of Munster. "Hereward drew up the lines and led them", ploughing into "the midst of the enemy's wedges, killing to the right and left", finally dispatching the Duke of Munster and effectively winning the battle. He then, the *Gesta* tells us, again saved the Cornish princess from a local lord, disguising himself by dying his blond hair black and his beard red to sneak into the lord's lair, free the princess and carry her to the prince to whom she was betrothed.

Hereward's escapades continued when, blown off course while attempting to sail back to Cornwall, he was shipwrecked in Flanders where, according to the *Gesta*, he became embroiled in yet another local conflict. Joining the army of Robert, son of the Count of Flanders, he took part in an assault on a place named as Scaldemariland (the exact location of which is unknown), whose inhabitants refused to pay the tribute they owed to Flanders. As "the master of the soldiers" in Robert's army, according to

As William rode away from Ely, one man must have haunted his thoughts: Hereward

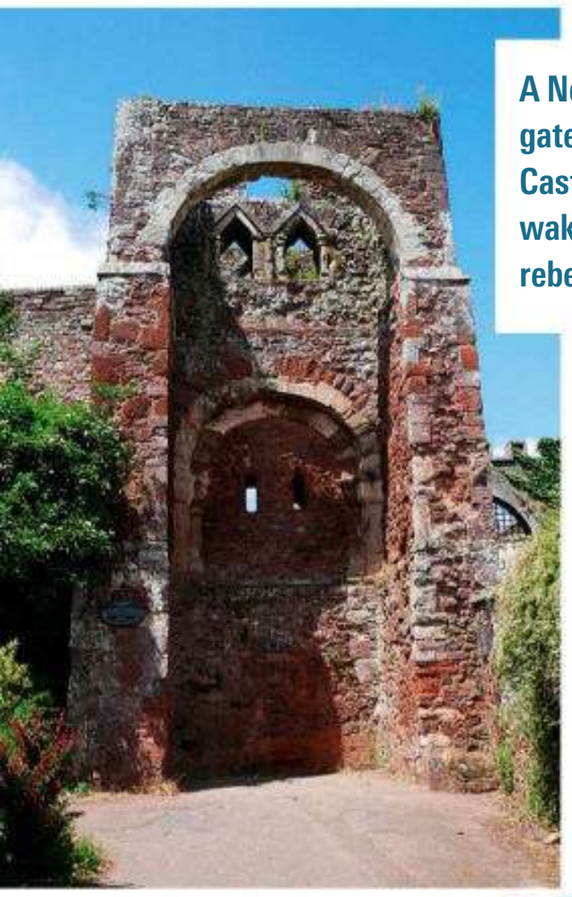
GETTY IMAGES

REBEL NATION The battles and uprisings that defined and defied the Norman conquest

The Bayeux Tapestry shows William the Conqueror exhorting his troops at the battle of Hastings

1 14 October 1066 At the battle of Hastings, **William the Conqueror defeats King Harold II** to win the throne of England.

2 1067 Eadric the Wild, an Anglo-Saxon magnate of Shropshire and Herefordshire, launches a **rebellion in Herefordshire** aided by the Welsh prince of Gwynedd and Powys. They attack the Norman base at Hereford but, defeated, retreat to Wales to plot further unrest.



A Norman gatehouse at Exeter Castle, built in the wake of an English rebellion in 1068

3 1068 Exeter rebels against William's rule. Gytha, mother of King Harold II, was present and may have inspired the resistance. After an 18-day siege, the king takes the city and builds a new castle there.

4 1068 Hereward the Wake returns to England from exile to find his father and brother dead (probably in Lincolnshire) and his lands taken by Normans. He kills those within his house and flees to the Isle of Ely as an outlaw.

5 1068 Edwin, Earl of Mercia and his brother Morcar, Earl of Northumbria spark rebellion. William quickly marches into Mercia and pacifies the area before moving into Northumbria.

6 1069 Eadric the Wild returns and burns Shrewsbury but is defeated in battle by William's forces at Stafford, submitting to the king the following year.

7 1069 Godwin and Edmund, two sons of King Harold II, raid the south-west coast from their base in Ireland. At the battle of Northam in Devon they are defeated by Brian of Brittany, Earl of Cornwall. Refused more support in Ireland, the brothers sail to Denmark but disappear from history.

8 1069–70 Edgar Ætheling, the last male heir of the House of Wessex, heads a rebellion in northern England, backed by sons of King Sweyn II of Denmark and their forces. The rebels take York, and their actions provoke a vicious Norman response known as the **Harrying of the North**.

9 1070 King Sweyn II arrives in England on the Humber estuary. Recognising the threat, William pays Sweyn to leave England in peace.

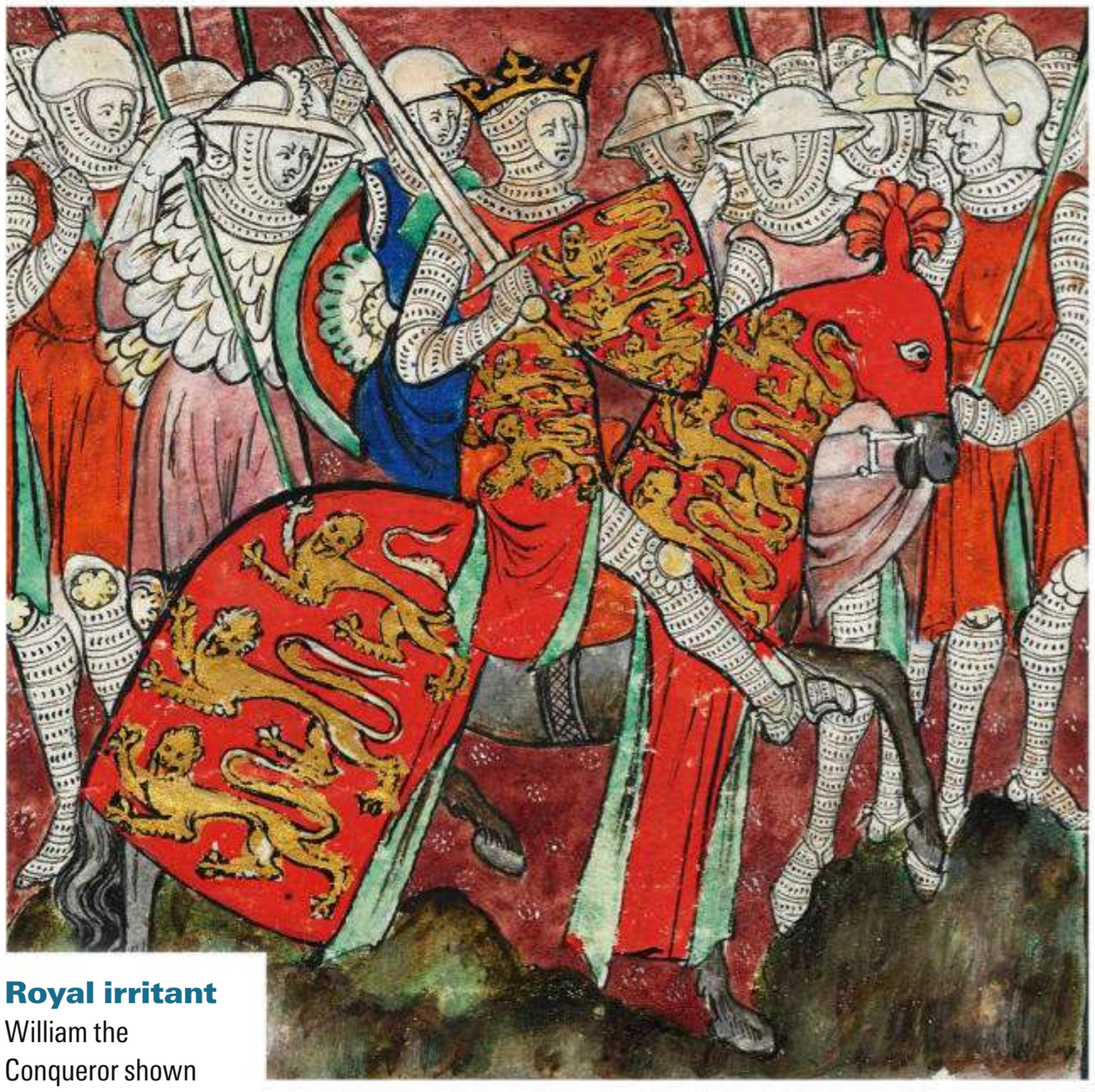
A cast of the head of Danish king Sweyn II, who was a thorn in the Normans' side

10 1070 Hereward plunders Peterborough Abbey, burning the town. His uncle, Abbot Brand, had died and been replaced by the Norman Thorold. Hereward claims he is protecting the abbey's treasures from Norman plundering.

11 1071 The Siege of Ely ends as Hereward is betrayed by the monks and forced to flee. William makes two attempts to assault the Isle of Ely, both hampered by the treacherous marshes and Hereward's cunning.

12 1075 Ralph, Earl of East Anglia, Roger, Earl of Hereford, and Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland **try to co-ordinate a revolt but fail**. Ralph's countess holds Norwich Castle long enough to obtain terms that save the lives of her and the garrison. **The Revolt of the Earls is the last major insurrection** against William the Conqueror.

BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY/WIKI



Royal irritant
William the Conqueror shown in a 14th-century manuscript. The king's attempts to prise Hereward out of his rebel base on Ely ended in repeated frustration

the *Gesta*, Hereward turned the tide of the clash, leading 300 men into the enemy camp, slaughtering those he found there and securing double tribute from Scaldemariland. His tactics were, the *Gesta* writes, "a complete surprise and as far as the enemy was concerned, beyond all their experience in warfare".

Unhappy returns

Around 1068, soon after his Scaldemariland triumph, Hereward returned to England. It was not a happy homecoming. In his absence the country, the *Gesta* complains, had become "subject to the rule of foreigners and almost ruined by the exactions of many" – and his family had suffered from these exactions. Hereward's father was dead, and his brother had been killed the day before his return. Normans had taken the family lands. Stung by guilt and rage, Hereward crept into his home under cover of darkness and slaughtered all the Normans within.

Soon, says the *Gesta*, Hereward was leading ranks of "fugitives, and condemned men as well as those that had been disinherited". He went to his uncle Brand, the abbot of Peterborough, to be knighted. Even this was positioned as an act of defiance, because Normans believed knighting by a clergyman was improper.

Worse still for the Normans, they were now assailed by a Danish invasion army led by the sons of King Sweyn II (who sponsored the invasion). The Danes, we're told, made plans to join forces with Hereward's rebels – a threat that was only averted by William the Conqueror's decision to buy off the invaders.

By this time, Hereward's outlaws were based on the Isle of Ely, surrounded by an impenetrable marshland. From there they struck out at Norman authority, vanishing into the mist after each sortie. The *Liber Eliensis* records Hereward and his band "carrying out pillaging-raids and depredations far and wide, a hundred men at a time, or more than that, being often killed by them". One of their targets was Peterborough – in an attempt, so Hereward claimed, to protect the abbey's treasures from the Normans' greed.

William was advised by some to make peace, on the basis that it was "for the sake of the heritage bequeathed to them by their fathers that they have been making these attacks on us". Others, though, counselled the king not to give in to rebels. William, it seems, found the latter advice more persuasive. In 1071, the king went on the attack.

Assembling an army, William found the narrowest point of the marshes around Ely and ordered the construction of a causeway. Trees were felled and lashed together to form a series of platforms. Sheepskins were sewn up and inflated to provide buoyancy. Their work complete, the enthusiastic Normans charged across the causeway – only for it to collapse beneath them, drowning most of the army. Only one knight, named Dada, made it across; he was captured, but well treated. Hereward, we're told, showed him his rebels' impressive defences and then released him so he could warn William of the futility of trying to attack them.

Pots and plans

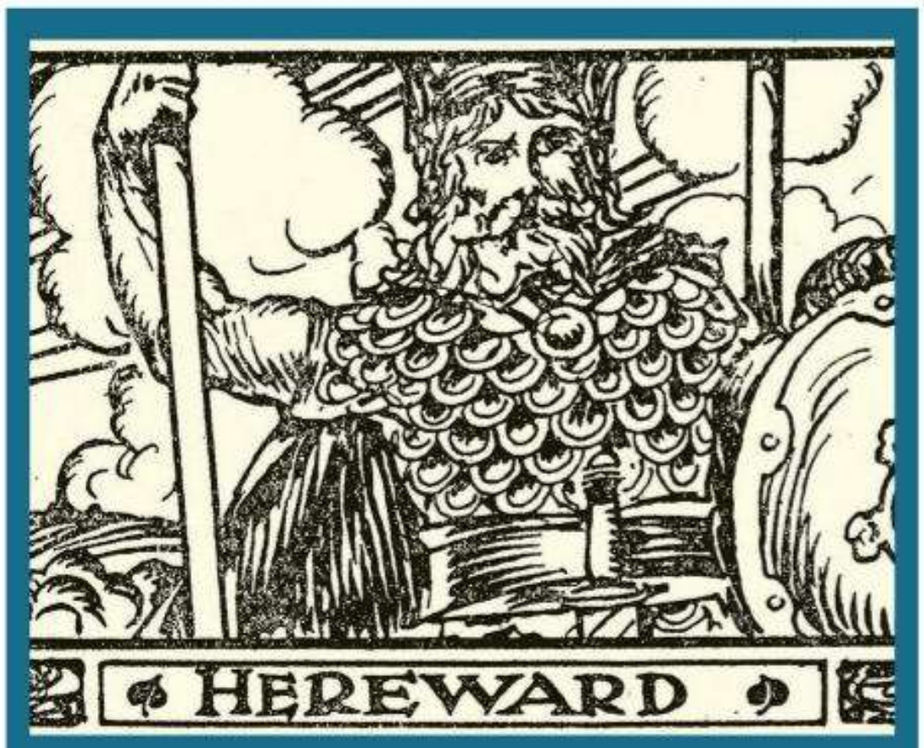
As William mulled over his options, Hereward is recorded as pulling off another extraordinary escapade – sneaking off the isle disguised as a potter, infiltrating the Norman camp and obtaining intelligence that ultimately led to the failure of the plan to defeat him using witchcraft. Still in disguise, Hereward lodged with a widow at Brampton (William had moved the royal court to the town after the failed assault on Ely), where the Norman nobleman Ivo Taillebois was hatching a plot with the witch he had recruited. Sitting anonymously in a corner, Hereward overheard the whole plan.

Later, while he wandered through the town pretending to sell pots, an observer identified him as Hereward. Taken to the king's hall, he was relieved when those gathered came to agree that, though the likeness was striking, this man was significantly shorter than the mighty Hereward. He was sent to the kitchens where the royal servants made fun of him; scattering his pots around the floor, they tried to blindfold him, hoping he would smash his wares as he stumbled about. When the potter resisted, one man punched him – and Hereward's temper snapped, knocking out the man and grabbing a fire iron to fend off the others. A guard rushed in but Hereward disarmed him, making his escape as soldiers pursued him into the night. News of this incident reached King William who told his men, perhaps unconvincingly, that he admired the rebel as "a man of noble soul and a most distinguished warrior".

William soon returned to Ely, ordering palisades to be built and a new, sturdier causeway to be constructed. The king called in local fishermen to transport supplies, and Hereward slipped in among them, having shaved his head and beard. He watched the work throughout the day, pretending to help. When evening fell, though, he set fire to it all and crept back to Ely. When the Normans finally managed to complete their construction, Ivo Taillebois

Hereward returned to England to find his father and brother dead, and his lands stolen by the Normans

BRIDGEMAN



Self-serving? Hereward shown in an engraving from 1909 for *The Pageant of British History*. Despite such heroic depictions, the Wake's motives might not have been entirely altruistic

Who was Hereward?

The "Wake" was, it's been suggested by some later writers searching for his true identity, the son of Leofric, Earl of Mercia and his wife Godgifu, better known as Lady Godiva. That couple *did* have a wayward son named Ælfgar, who was exiled in 1055 and returned to harass Edward the Confessor until he was pardoned. Ælfgar may have provided a model for the adventures of Hereward, leading to confusion over his parentage. Others have claimed that he was the son of one Leofric of Bourne, but this potential father cannot be traced in any source.

The most helpful clue to Hereward's background comes from the Crowland Chronicle, which describes Abbot Brand of Peterborough as Hereward's patruus – paternal uncle. Brand is sufficiently well recorded for his four brothers to be documented: Asketil, Siric, Siworth and Godric. The likely ages of these brothers, as well as the fact that Hereward was considered heir to the family's lands, suggest that the eldest, Asketil, was Hereward's father.

Brand and his brothers were the sons of Toki of Lincoln, son of Auti, a wealthy man also from Lincoln. This family, as perhaps demonstrated by their names, were of Danish descent, part of an Anglo-Danish community that settled in the north and east after various Viking incursions. Only the youngest, Godric, has a name that sounds English, hinting either that the family was by then firmly established in the local community or that Toki had taken an English wife.

The writer of The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is confident that Hereward was allied to the Danish army of King Sweyn II, and that the attachment was part of the reason William was so keen to buy off the Danes. Asketil, according to Domesday Book, held 26 carucates, the Danelaw equivalent of a hide – the measure of land deemed sufficient to support one family. His holdings were, therefore, large enough to be worth fighting to regain – which ultimately may have been Hereward's aim all along.

BRIDGEMAN

set his witch to work. As recounted at the start of this article, she completed her incantation – just at the moment when Hereward's men, hidden in the waters of the marsh, set fire to the willows and brushwood and burned the Norman siegeworks.

Once again confounded by this elusive foe, William had no choice but to change tactics. Aiming at another target, he seized all of the lands held by the monastery at Ely. At this the monks panicked, offering to show the Normans a safe route onto the isle and to hand over the town. However, one monk, Alwinus, was disgusted at his brothers' behaviour and warned Hereward; the rebel and his men were thus able to escape, reversing their horses' shoes to disguise the direction of their retreat. Hereward then took up residence in the Brunneswald, an ancient forest in Northamptonshire. When William sent a huge Norman army against them, Hereward used the cover of the trees to strike at the attackers' flanks and vanish until the terrified and demoralised army withdrew.

Suddenly, and for reasons that the sources do not make clear, Hereward decided to seek peace with the king. He visited the court, but frustrated Norman knights had other ideas, orchestrating a fight between him and a man named Ogger. Hereward defeated the Normans' champion, only to be arrested for breaching the king's peace.

Months after the cat-and-mouse contest with his Norman pursuers had begun, Hereward found himself in the custody of Robert de Horpool at Bedford Castle. Here he remained for a year before the king ordered him transferred to less sympathetic jailers. Over the previous few months, though, Robert had grown fond of his captive and alerted Hereward's men. The handover was ambushed, and Hereward was freed. When Robert went to King William to explain himself, he delivered a message from Hereward: he would pay homage to William if his father's lands were returned. William agreed, stipulating only that "henceforth he must be willing to cultivate peace, not folly, if he wished hereafter to retain the king's friendship".

The famous rebel lived in peace for years afterwards, enjoying his family's inheritance and the respect of William the Conqueror. Over the centuries that followed, Hereward became a figure of heroic English resistance to the weight of the Norman yoke. Yet all was not quite as it has been recalled. It is clear from Hereward's homage to William that his rebellion wasn't entirely fuelled by altruism or patriotism. He did not, it seems, seek to overturn the Conquest, or to free others from the tyranny of the king. He wanted his own lands back, and when he got them, he submitted peacefully.

Nor, the evidence suggests, was Hereward exactly an Englishman. Charles Kingsley's 1866 novel *Hereward the Wake: Last of the English* raised Hereward up as a nationalist hero, but Hereward – considered for centuries a quintessentially English protagonist – was probably of Danish extraction, a man of possibly mixed heritage absorbed into the complex web of English society in the 11th century (see sidebar, left). Yet, whatever his aims and however his name was used in later centuries, Hereward's lasting legacy is a thrilling story of daring adventures in defiance of a king. H

Matt Lewis is a historian with a particular interest in medieval England. His latest book, *Rebellion in the Middle Ages: Fight Against the Crown*, was published by Pen & Sword in October

LISTEN

An episode of BBC Radio 4's **The Penny Dreadfuls** focused on Hereward: *bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b01pg3r6*

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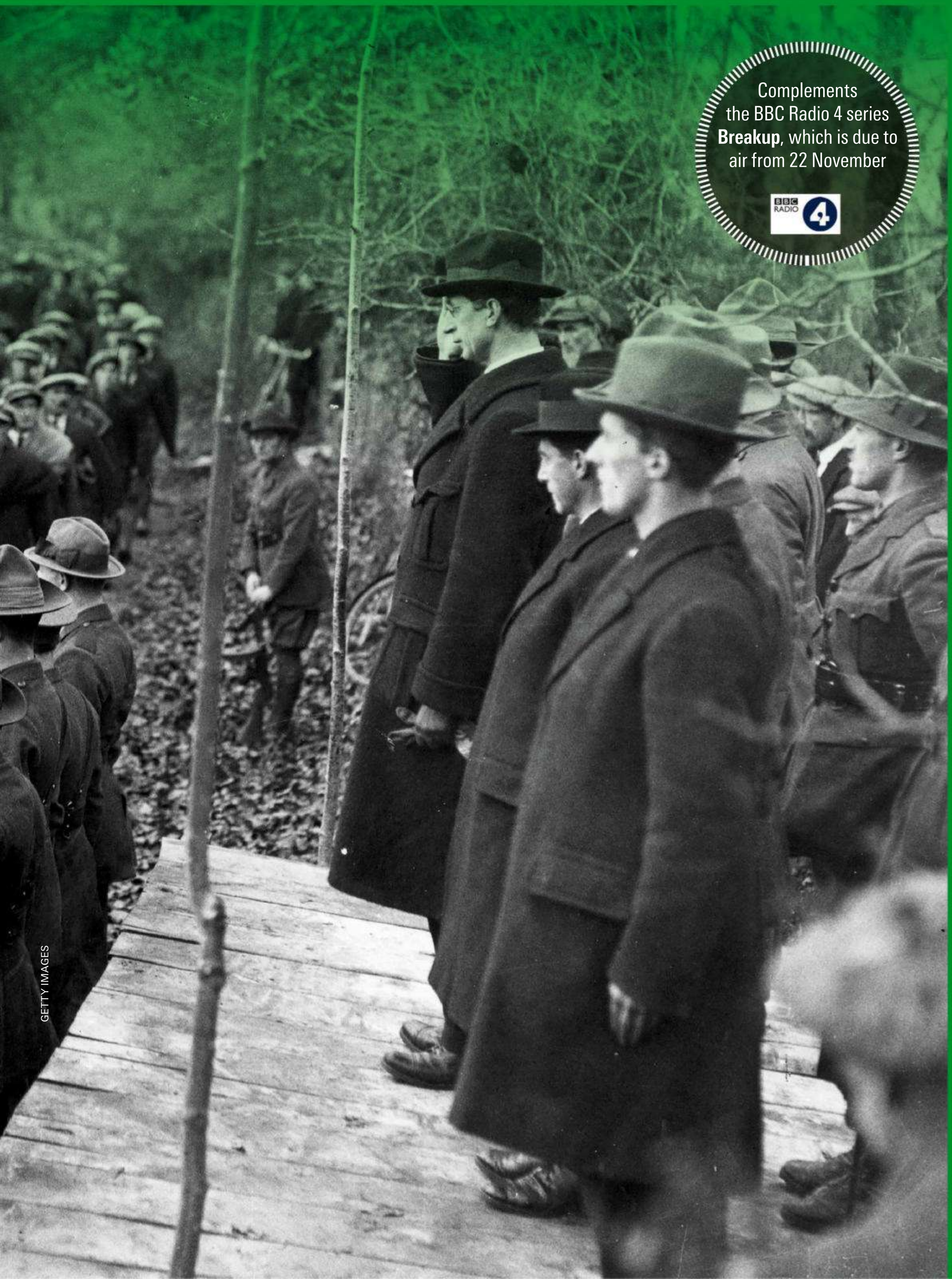
The road to partition

The division of Ireland in 1921 was confirmed by a treaty that aimed to resolve the so-called "Irish Question". A century on from that pivotal event, **Charles Townshend** explores five key episodes in the process of partition

Politics and war
Irish republican leader Éamon de Valera (right) salutes IRA men, December 1921. Demands for home rule conflicted with unionist sentiment, leading to violence and division



Complements the BBC Radio 4 series **Breakup**, which is due to air from 22 November

BBC RADIO 4

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Northern resistance
Unionist leader Edward Carson (centre) and colleagues visit Derry/Londonderry, September 1912 – the month when nearly half a million people signed a "Solemn League and Covenant" to resist home rule

1 Unionists oppose home rule

British government attempts to solve the "Irish question" trigger a backlash in the north

During the years after prime minister WE Gladstone launched a policy of home rule for Ireland in 1885, British politics was repeatedly convulsed by disputes on the issue. The policy was his attempt to resolve the "Irish question" – how to respond to demands by Irish nationalists that Ireland should be self-governing. Since the 1801 Act of Union had yoked together the two kingdoms, Irish discontent had produced repeated violence. Gladstone's aim was to concede enough power to a Dublin parliament to satisfy Irish nationalists, while keeping the framework of the union intact.

It was hoped that this would overcome the objections to home rule already voiced by unionists throughout the UK and particularly by the Protestant community in north-eastern Ireland. For them, Irish nationalism was a Catholic cause, and Catholicism a primitive and oppressive religion; home rule would be "Rome rule", threatening their way of life.

Whether home rule – essentially, the devolution of domestic administration – would have satisfied Irish nationalists will never be known. It was accepted by the majority who formed the nationalist Irish Party at Westminster, then led by Charles Stewart Parnell, but was rejected by republican separatists who demanded full independence. Meanwhile, defenders of the union, centred in the historical northern province of Ulster, argued that home rule would prove to be merely a halfway house to a republic. Gladstone's bill split his party and was defeated in the House of Commons.

It was the mobilisation of unionist opposition that turned the effort to pass a home rule bill, and two subsequent attempts, into a major constitutional crisis carrying the threat of civil war. That threat reached a new level after the Third Home Rule bill was introduced in April 1912 by the Liberal government under prime minister HH Asquith. The Conservative party responded by denouncing home rule as undemocratic, because it was not supported by British public opinion, and charged that the cabinet had "seized despotic power by fraud". In the north of Ireland, the language became even more inflammatory.

On 28 September 1912 – declared "Ulster Day" by unionist opponents of Irish home rule – nearly half a million people signed Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant, vowing to resist home rule "using all means which may be found necessary". Over the next few months, 100,000 men joined the Ulster Volunteer Force, a citizen militia that drilled openly and imported arms more secretly. Unionists in Ulster, where they represented a majority of the population, were, in effect, threatening to declare their own independence rather than be placed under "Catholic" rule. Their leader, Edward Carson, was mocked as "King Carson" by nationalists – who dismissed the Ulster threat as bluff – but his followers were deadly serious.

Eventually, following a quasi-mutiny at the British Army's main Irish base at the Curragh in March 1914, Asquith accepted that there could be no Irish settlement that involved the "coercion of Ulster". He offered to exclude from home rule several north-eastern counties for six years, during which time a general election would be held. Unionists, though, demanded permanent exclusion. Then war broke out in Europe, and home rule was suspended for the duration of the First World War. When frustrated nationalists launched an armed rebellion at Easter 1916, David Lloyd George (then minister of munitions) offered home rule – but with six Ulster counties excluded. Partition was on the way.

Unionists threatened to declare their own independence rather than be placed under "Catholic" rule

Armed rebellion
Smoke billows from buildings in Dublin during the Easter Rising of 1916. During this violent rebellion, nationalist leaders declared an Irish Republic

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

2 Nationalists launch a guerrilla war

Irish Volunteers and IRA members attack police, sparking bloody reprisals

By the end of the war in Europe in 1918, Irish nationalism had been transformed. The Irish Party was almost wiped out by the separatist Sinn Féin, which had spoken out against recruitment to the British Army and rejected the British political system. Its triumph in the December 1918 general election was followed in January by its declaration of Irish independence and the establishment of a revolutionary republican government in Dublin.

As the Irish Volunteer organisation established in 1913 was rebuilt after the military failure of the 1916 rebellion, local groups gradually began guerrilla operations. Tipperary Volunteers carried out the first lethal attack on the police on 21 January 1919, the same day as the declaration of independence – partly to make sure that Sinn Féin politicians could not go back on their commitment to the republic.

This potential tension persisted as the republican campaign developed through the winter of 1919–20. The Irish Republican Army (IRA, which evolved from the Irish Volunteers) gathered weapons, launched attacks on police barracks and assassinated detectives of the Dublin special branch. The British authorities were slow to react; recruitment of "Black and Tans" – mostly British reinforcements for the Royal Irish Constabulary – began in January 1920, but it wasn't till spring that the ineffective administration in Dublin was overhauled.

The British government tried to balance repression with conciliation, launching another home rule bill late in 1919 that separated six Protestant-majority counties in the north of Ireland from the other 26. This was effectively partition, albeit with a kind of federal structure: both Irish parliaments had equal powers, and a law-making Council of Ireland was established to provide a framework of unity.

Crown forces – police and army – were always hampered by the difficulty of getting information about the IRA. Only in mid-1920 was an attempt made to build an intelligence system. How effective this was may be debated – the army took a dim view of the intelligence chief – but it did enough to rattle the IRA's own director of intelligence, Michael Collins (pictured above), who planned a violent response.

Early in the morning of 21 November 1920, small groups of IRA men entered eight hotels and lodging houses in Dublin on an assassination mission, shooting dead 12 men; three more later died of their injuries, and several others were wounded. Most were British Army officers, claimed to be members of a secret intelligence outfit labelled the "Cairo Gang" operating against the IRA. Later that day, in the hope of finding some of the attackers, British troops and auxiliary police surrounded the Gaelic football stadium at Croke Park during a match; firing broke out and 12 more people (including a Tipperary football player and a number of young boys) were shot dead, with another two dying in the ensuing crush. In the evening of what was quickly christened "Bloody Sunday", three prisoners – including the commander of the IRA Dublin brigade – were killed "attempting to escape".

This spate of killings was unusual even in 1920, but it highlighted the crisis of governance in Ireland. The damage done to British intelligence was far outweighed by the shock effect on public opinion. When a major ambush in west Cork annihilated a police patrol, there was a sense that the IRA was becoming a more formidable military force.

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Bloody Sunday
A contemporary illustration depicts the violence of 21 November 1920, which began with IRA assassinations followed by the shooting dead of 12 people at a Gaelic football match

After the riots
Belfast residents gather at the telegraph offices to check lists of those killed during riots in summer 1920. Violence in the north was partly a reaction in Ulster to the perceived risk that partition might not occur

3 Northern Ireland stands apart

Elections demonstrate the strength of Ulster unionism

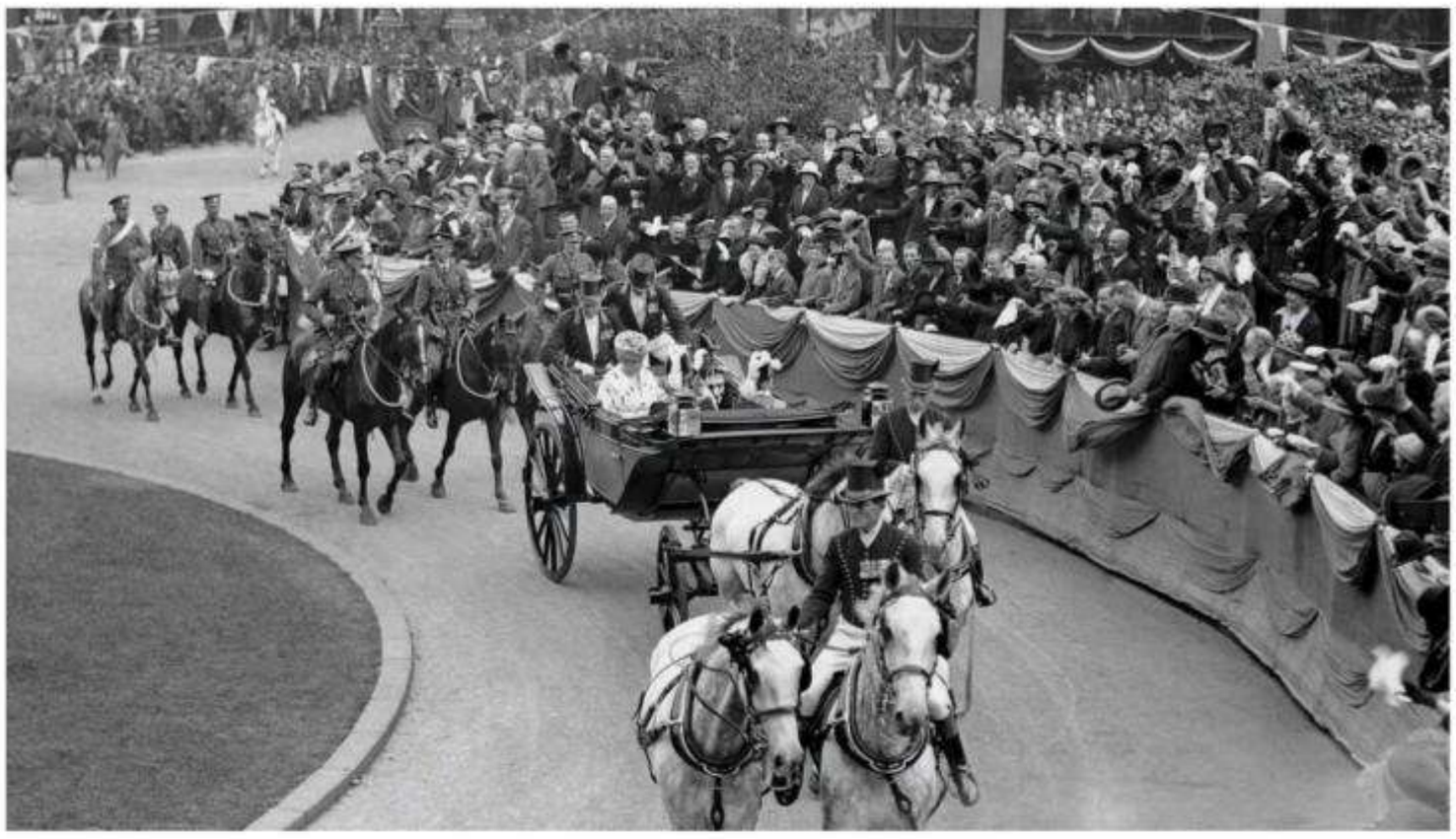
Though there were relatively few IRA attacks in Ulster, the republican campaign was seen there as a direct threat. Many Ulster Protestants believed that Catholics were all republican sympathisers, if not active rebels.

When the government began to lose faith in the home rule bill in the summer of 1920, Ulster Unionist leader James Craig urged that the bill be pushed through to secure Northern Ireland. That summer was a torrid period in the north, with destructive riots in Belfast and elsewhere; Catholic dock workers were attacked and their families were driven from their homes. In the autumn, even before the bill became law, a six-county administration was established and a new police force, the Ulster Special Constabulary, was launched.

When a fourth home rule bill became the Government of Ireland Act in December 1920, intended to partition the island into north and south, it was clear that only one of the two parliaments it proposed was likely to come into existence – in the north. The first elections were to be held in May 1921, but the British military commander in Ireland frankly told the government that IRA intimidation would ensure that the parliament of the south would (apart from Dublin University) consist entirely of Sinn Féiners – who, of course, would refuse to attend it.

It was at this point that Lloyd George made up his mind to negotiate with the republicans. The northern parliamentary elections, on the other hand, showed the solidity of Ulster unionism and revealed differences between Sinn Féin and the old nationalist party, which retained some of its strength in the north. The election result – returning 40 Unionists, six Irish Party and six Sinn Féin, on a turnout of 88 per cent – led the unionist *Impartial Reporter* to declare that "the North is now independent".

The first meeting of the Northern Ireland parliament in Belfast City Hall in June 1921 was an epochal moment. King George V caused a sensation, arriving with Queen Mary for the opening. Vast crowds celebrated his presence – though, with a political engagement rare in the modern monarchy, he refused to deliver the speech prepared by Craig, a sort of Ulster manifesto. Instead, he made a resonant appeal to "Irishmen" to "forgive and forget", and "stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation".



Royal arrival
King George V and Queen Mary ride through Belfast for the opening of the Northern Ireland parliament in June 1921. The king used the opportunity to appeal to "Irishmen" to "forgive and forget"

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Praying for peace
Irish people hold a prayer vigil in London during peace negotiations between the British government and Irish republican leaders in July 1921

4 A truce is agreed

The government and nationalists negotiate to end a stalemate

At the time of the elections, the military situation had been rather finely balanced. The IRA, especially in Dublin, was reeling from a series of major arms seizures in the preceding months. And in May 1921, the British commander-in-chief in Ireland, General Nevil Macready, produced a pessimistic report warning that his troops were at the end of their endurance and that, unless the situation had been wrapped up by October, the entire garrison would have to be replaced. As the British government knew, this was impossible, due to the speed of postwar demobilisation.

On the republican side, there were also doubts: though the most active armed units in the south-east thought they could keep the field indefinitely, the Dublin command – notably Michael Collins – was more conscious of the limits of arms supply and the wide variations in the effectiveness of the IRA nationally. Following the king's speech in June, the British government proposed a conference to discuss a truce.

As late as 6 July, the British cabinet had not decided whether a truce – if there were to be one – should be formal or, as the police commander wanted, "tacit". Macready, not an admirer of the police, favoured the former.

On 8 July 1921, Dawson Street was thronged with Dubliners who had got wind of a big event: the British prime minister's intermediary, the Earl of Midleton, was meeting Sinn Féin leaders Arthur Griffith and Éamon de Valera at the Mansion House in Dublin for negotiations. Then Macready arrived, a pistol bulging conspicuously in his tunic pocket; to his surprise, the crowd went wild with delight. After a few hours, a suspension of hostilities was agreed.

Truth to power
General Nevil Macready (pictured, right, with Winston Churchill), whose warning that troops in Ireland were exhausted helped drive truce negotiations

Though the truce was signed, and came into effect on 11 July, there was never an agreed published version of its terms; instead it was a fudge, with each side understanding its terms somewhat differently. Its net effect, though, was that while the British army halted all its operations, on which its limited control of the country depended, the IRA continued to import weapons and stepped up recruitment and training.

The army's sense of betrayal by the government was important in setting the tone for the extended Anglo-Irish talks that followed, pointing up the military pessimism that inclined Britain to compromise. The talks took weeks to get going, and then stuttered on for months – but both sides had a lot to lose if they failed.

There was never an agreed published version of the terms of the truce – instead, it was a fudge

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Delegation for division
Nationalist delegates, including Sinn Féin deputy leader Arthur Griffith (far left) and Michael Collins (seated centre), at the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which was drafted by British prime minister David Lloyd George (inset) on 6 December 1921

5 The treaty is signed

Nationalists agree to partition – believing that the north would eventually join the south

After a shaky start, negotiations got under way on the basis of Lloyd George's formula – summing up, in a sense, the whole "Irish question" – to find a way of reconciling Ireland's "association with the British empire" with "Irish national aspirations". This project still looked to many like squaring a circle. The British believed that they were conceding a limited freedom to Ireland, while Sinn Féin claimed that Ireland was already free but might "go back into" the British empire. Financial and defence issues were also complicated, but never as intractable as the questions of sovereignty and the unity of Ireland.

It appeared to many nationalists that Britain turned to negotiation only once partition had been wrapped up. But if it now looks as if there was no going back on it, it did not seem like that to loyalists in Ulster. There, fears of a sell-out were deeply embedded, and the open-ended process was potentially disastrous. The negotiations clearly meant that the devolved powers defined in the 1920 Government of Ireland Act (rejected by Sinn Féin) would be expanded, and the whole two-parliament framework might also be revised. Indeed, the Sinn Féin delegates went into talks planning to force a breakdown on the issue of Ulster, believing (with good reason) that British public opinion would not support "unreasonable" unionist intransigence.

Sinn Féin deputy leader Arthur Griffith, though, realised that Britain would not try to "coerce" Ulster into the new Irish Free State directly; at best it would do so indirectly, by threatening revision of the Northern Ireland border. The idea of a boundary commission, which had appeared when the 1920 Act was introduced, resurfaced when the talks were at a critical stage in mid-October. Griffith believed that Lloyd George would use it to bring the Northern government into line, and he undertook not to "queer" the prime minister's position on it. However, this promise remained unknown to the other plenipotentiaries until the last moment.

The night of 5 December 1921, following nearly six months of tortuous negotiations, was a moment of intense political drama in London. Irish delegates headed by Griffith were confronted by Lloyd George's theatrical statement that unless they signed his draft treaty that evening, and it was received by the Northern Ireland government next day, "immediate and terrible war" would follow within three days. Lloyd George had a courier waiting, and a destroyer with steam up at Holyhead to take him to Belfast.

Tension within the Irish delegation was still high as they battled over the two key issues of sovereignty and unity. Without the revelation that night of Griffith's conviction – shared by Collins – that large transfers of territory from the north would follow, making the northern state unviable, the treaty might well not have been agreed. But, after an agonised discussion, the delegation signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty. According to the treaty, all 32 counties would be part of the Irish Free State, but the six counties of Northern Ireland were given the right to opt out. And when the Free State came into legal existence a year later, Northern Ireland immediately did so. Partition was complete. H

Ulster anxieties
An anti-home-rule postcard reveals some of the concerns of Ulster Protestants

Charles Townshend is professor emeritus of international history at Keele University. His latest book is *The Partition: Ireland Divided, 1885–1925* (Allen Lane, 2021)

LISTEN The five-part BBC Radio 4 series **Breakup**, exploring the 1925 Irish Boundary Commission, begins on Monday 22 November

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THE AFTERMATH OF PARTITION

The events of a century ago had a transformative impact on Irish politics and society – and their legacy is still being felt today, writes Charles Townshend

Years after partition, veteran nationalist JJ Horgan provocatively insisted that it was not the 1920 Government of Ireland Act that truly divided the island but the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, which created two very different entities by making southern Ireland a dominion. As time would show, dominion status delivered – as Collins argued during the debate on the treaty – the capacity to break the crown link altogether. Yet republican irreconcilables refused to accept this; for them, the treaty was no more and no less than a betrayal of the republic. This moral take dominated the debate, pushing partition – even the key issue of border revision – to the sidelines. The republican view, as voiced by Sinn Féin politician Kathleen O'Callaghan, was that this was simply "a matter of right and wrong".

Sinn Féin deputy leader Arthur Griffith, though, argued against this position, claiming that fighting on endlessly for an impossible ideal would destroy the actual "living Irish nation". And Michael Collins, who had accepted that the IRA campaign could not physically expel the British from Ireland or compel them to recognise the republic, held that, though the treaty did not offer outright freedom, it did provide "the freedom to achieve it". This division in opinion split Sinn Féin; that, and the disintegration of the IRA, led to a chaotic civil war in which local feuds were fought out alongside national ones.

At that point in the early 1920s the long-term future and composition of the north (and, therefore, the south) was still in question, and a leaked map published in the London *Morning Post* on 7 November 1925 triggered an Irish political crisis. It showed the border changes planned by the boundary commission, which had been meeting for the past year. Though there were to be transfers to the Irish Free State (including south Armagh), nationalist hopes of large-scale transfers were dashed. Worse, there were to be one or two small transfers from the Free State to Northern Ireland. The Dublin government, fearing a catastrophic public reaction, quickly abandoned the idea of border revision. The anomalous borderline stayed in place for the next century.

Despite the conflict in the south that followed partition, within a decade the Irish Free State was a functional democracy. In 1932, Éamon de Valera's quasi-republican Fianna Fáil party formed a government that in 1937 proceeded to write the crown out of the Irish constitution. Shortly before the Second World War, Britain abandoned the garrisons it had retained in the Free State under the treaty, demonstrating how irrelevant that old policy – of holding Ireland to guarantee Britain's security – had become.

The eventual declaration of an Irish republic was made not by de Valera – who refused to do this while Ireland was divided – but in 1949 by a coalition of his opponents (ironically, descendants of the pro-treaty party). The British response codified the triangular relationship that has existed since the treaty: the 1949 Ireland Act affirmed that the north would not cease to be part of the UK "without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland".

The long-term future and composition of the north was still in question

This principle had been implicit in the whole partition process from 1912 but now became explicit, and was reaffirmed in the joint Downing Street Declaration by the British and Irish governments in 1993. At the time, though, this negative constant was sidelined by the declaration's emphasis on the all-Irish dimension. This paved the way for the "peace process", culminating in the 1998 Belfast Agreement. Over the following two decades, this made the border increasingly invisible, and the "border poll" – a vote on unification offered in the agreement – looked increasingly irrelevant. However, the 2016 Brexit referendum, in which Northern Ireland voted conclusively to remain in the EU, changed that – and now a new border row is brewing. H

A new dawn? A young mother and son walk past an Ulster Defence Association mural in west Belfast, 2011. In the years following the 1998 Belfast Agreement, the Irish border became "increasingly invisible", according to Charles Townshend, but things have changed following the Brexit referendum

ALAMY

Tales of a fra

Mixed emotions
Seventeenth-century paintings showing the "Crying Philosopher" and the "Laughing Philosopher". Renaissance physicians viewed melancholy as an infinitely varied condition, encompassing terror and delusion, exuberance and despair

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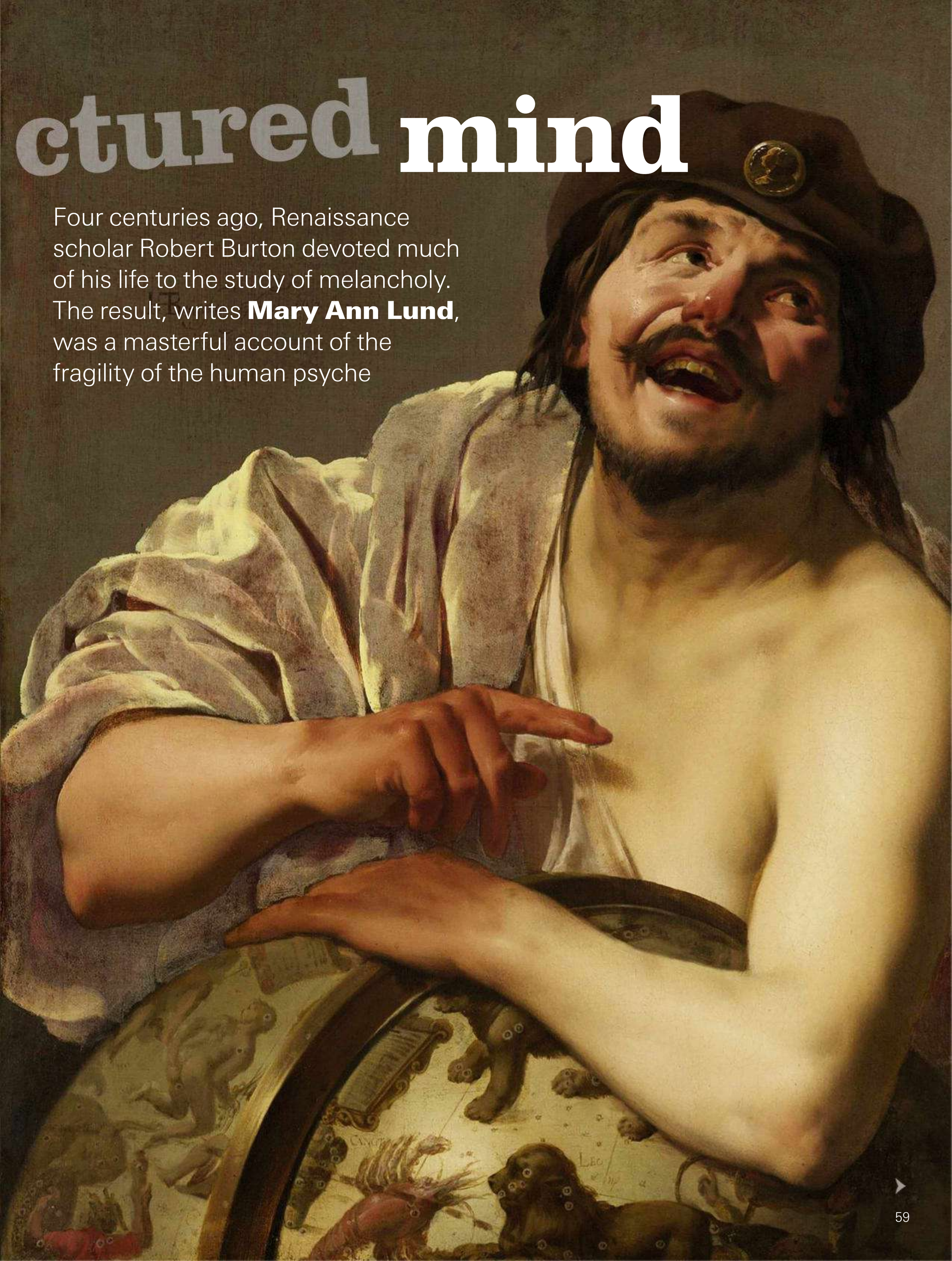
ctured mind

Four centuries ago, Renaissance scholar Robert Burton devoted much of his life to the study of melancholy. The result, writes **Mary Ann Lund**, was a masterful account of the fragility of the human psyche



Renaissance melancholy

The casebooks of Renaissance physicians contain many strange stories of melancholy, and few stranger than the case of the Italian gentleman who could not urinate. The 16th-century writer André du Laurens, physician to King Henri IV of France, records what happened: the patient told his doctors that he would rather die than go to the toilet because, if he relieved himself, he would drown his home city of Siena.

At first the patient's physicians tried to reason with him. They pointed out that the cubic capacity of his bladder was hardly equal to the task of submerging a whole city. Even 10,000 people, they said, would not be able to flood a single house. But the gentleman would not be convinced.

Seeing that his life was now in danger, the doctors hit on a novel treatment – if an extreme one. Rather than trying to persuade him through logic, instead they entered into his delusory state. They started a fire in the house next door and triggered Siena's fire alarm system – the ringing of church bells. The servants became bit-part actors in the drama, shouting out: "To the fire, to the fire!" Then the civic worthies came to visit the patient. They pleaded with him for help: there was only one way to save the town, and that was if he urinated and put out the fire.

So this melancholic man realised the danger and stepped up to the challenge of being Siena's first human fire hose. As he relieved his bladder, he was instantly cured. The doctors' unusual treatment succeeded, its elaborate and even theatrical method enabling their patient to live out his false belief and – quite literally – flush it out of his system.

The story is one of many that caught the eye of Robert Burton, an Oxford scholar who dedicated most of his life to writing *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). First printed 400 years ago, it is a vast compendium of melancholy that is also a literary masterpiece.

Burton defined melancholy as a type of "dotage" or mental instability typically accompanied by sorrow and fear. To us, it might be surprising that he included the story of the non-urinating Italian man in his discussion of melancholy, since nowadays we associate the term with a state of dejection, pensiveness, or even depression. Certainly those meanings have long been attached to it, but for more than 2,000 years, melancholy has encompassed much more.

During the 16th and 17th centuries – the cultural high-water mark of melancholy – the condition was seen as slippery, infinitely varied in its manifestations, and nearly impossible to categorise. Burton says of sufferers that there are "scarce two of two thousand that concur in the same symptoms. The tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues, as the chaos of melancholy doth variety of symptoms." While one patient feared urinating, another was convinced he was made of glass; one thought he had a giant head; another that he was a cockerel.

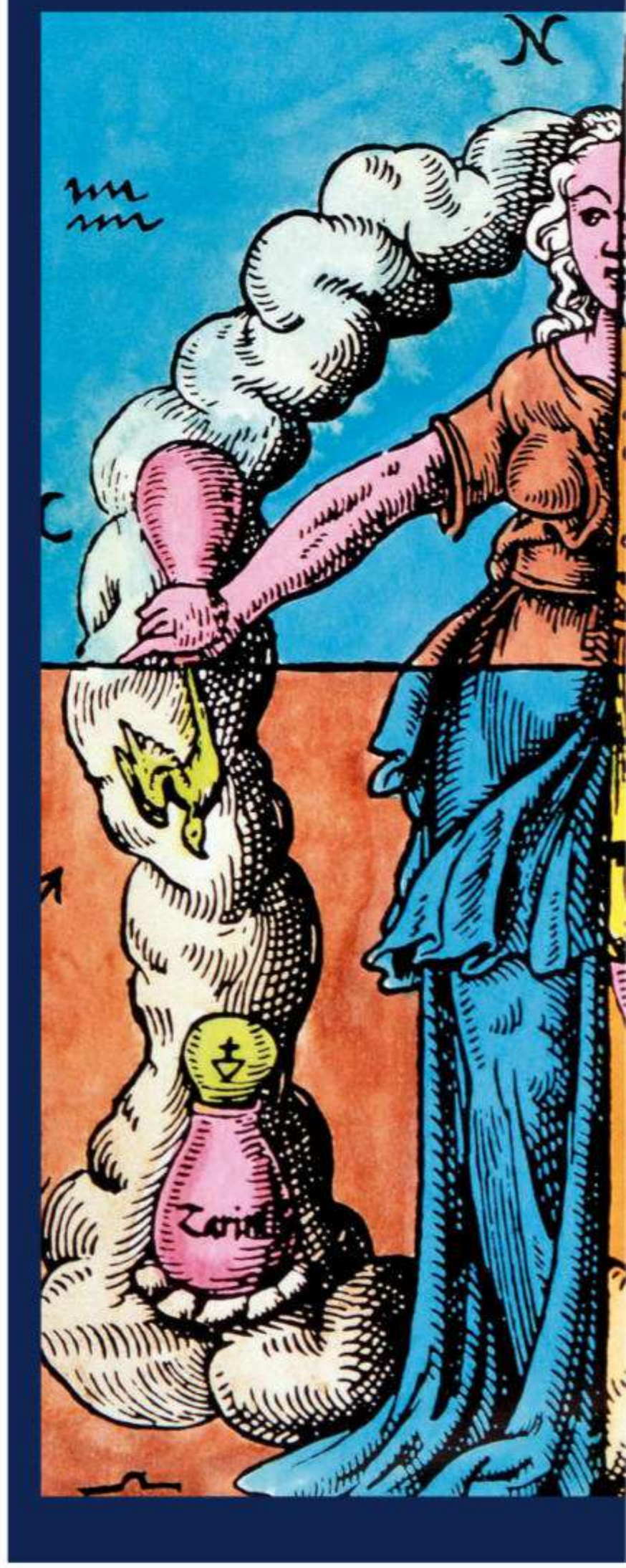
Some melancholics succumbed to despair and met a violent end; others simply wasted away with shame or embarrassment. Burton doggedly attempted to document all the cases he read, comparing himself to a "ranging spaniel" who picked up a scent and pursued it to its end.

Scratching the itch

Why did Burton devote himself to chronicling this condition? He observed that he suffered from melancholy himself and was driven to write about it as a form of self-therapy, or even as a symptom: "One must scratch where it itcheth," he said. That claim is borne out by the history of his book. After the *Anatomy* was first published in 1621, five more editions appeared, each enlarged with new stories of melancholy he had found through his omnivorous reading from the shelves of Renaissance learning: medicine, history, philosophy, theology and literature. In 1651, 11 years after Burton's death, his publishers printed the sixth edition of the *Anatomy*, now grown to more than half a million words.

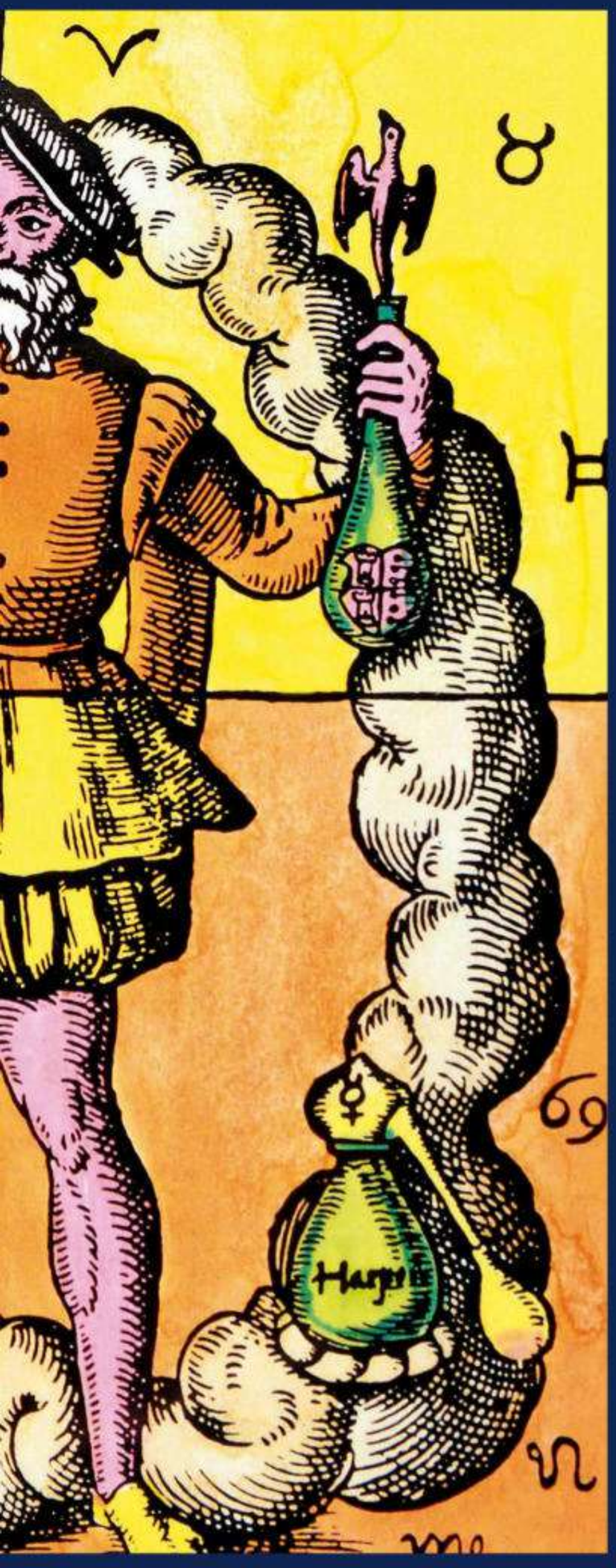
The *Anatomy* clearly captured the imagination of English Renaissance readers. But what was it that made its subject so appealing? A major reason is that melancholy was seen as a fashionable ailment. From ancient Greece onwards, the condition was associated not only with sadness and fear, but also with intellectual and creative genius. The

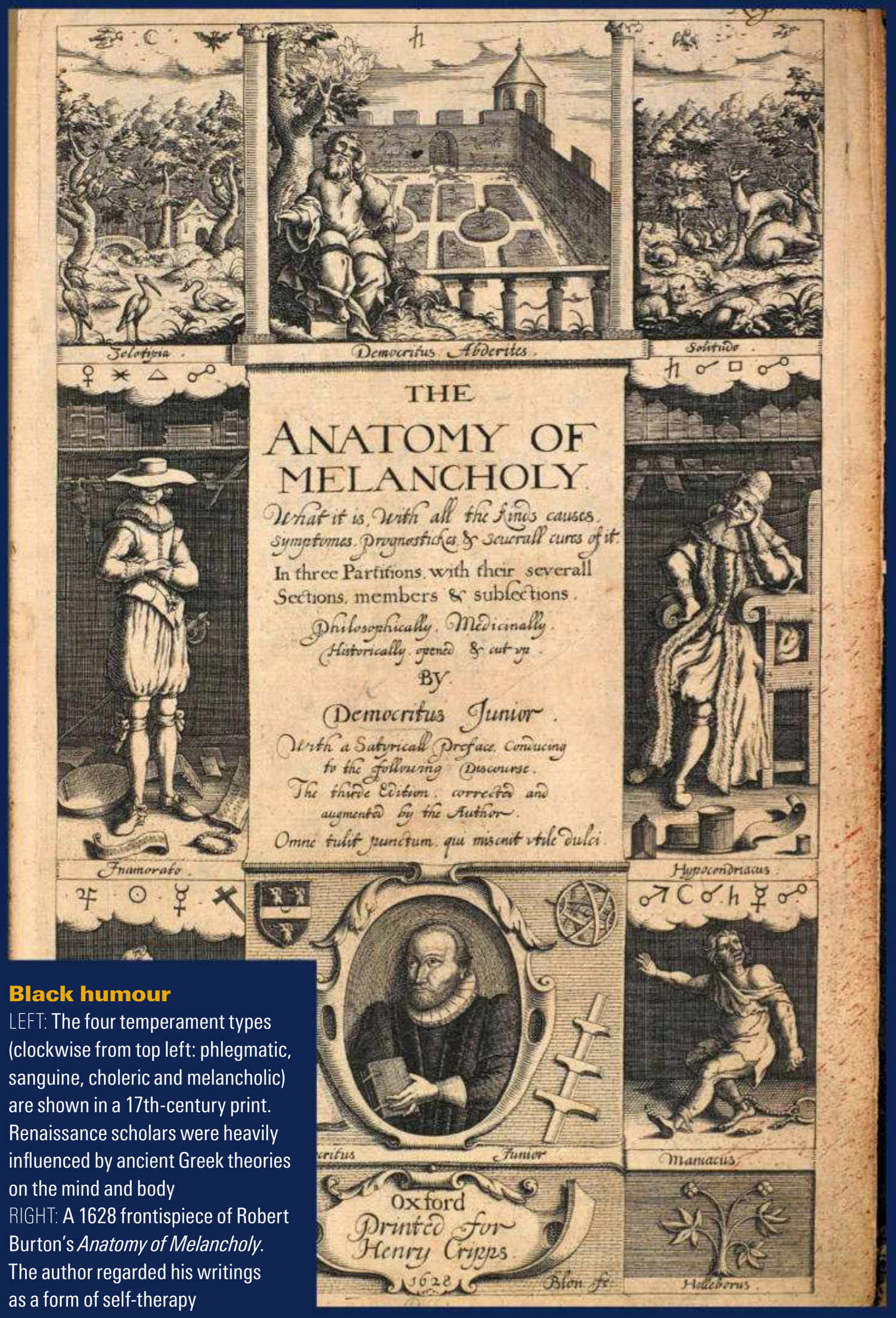
Dark glamour
This miniature by the Elizabethan portrait artist Isaac Oliver hints at the vogue for melancholy among gentlemen in the 16th century



Gentlemen presented themselves as lone, pensive figures, dressed in black. Put simply, it looked good to be melancholic

ALAMY





Black humour
LEFT: The four temperament types (clockwise from top left: phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric and melancholic) are shown in a 17th-century print. Renaissance scholars were heavily influenced by ancient Greek theories on the mind and body
RIGHT: A 1628 frontispiece of Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. The author regarded his writings as a form of self-therapy

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pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems* asked the question: "Why is it that all those men who have become extraordinary in philosophy, politics, poetry or the arts are obviously melancholic…?"

In the late 15th century, the Italian Neoplatonist scholar Marsilio Ficino argued that melancholy was the companion of scholarly introspection. Drawing on astrological theory, he claimed that Saturn cast its influence over deep thinkers, bringing contemplative wisdom but also a kind of holy madness. This brand of melancholy gave a dark glamour to the condition: it was a source of inspiration to artists and writers, while young gentlemen of the Tudor period fashioned themselves – like Hamlet – as lone, pensive figures, wearing black. Put simply, it looked good to be melancholy.

Bewitching thoughts

Yet being melancholy was far from a safe occupation, as Burton knew all too well. He describes it as like a Siren, that mythical creature who lured sailors to their watery deaths through her sweet singing. Melancholy can start out pleasantly enough: a person might want to spend time in solitary contemplation, wandering alone in woods or down by the river. "A most incomparable delight it is so to melancholise, and build castles in the air," he comments. Though seemingly innocent, this behaviour starts to intrude on everything, until the person experiencing it can no longer control it: "These fantastical and bewitching thoughts so covertly, so feelingly, so urgently, so continually set upon, creep in, insinuate, possess, overcome, distract, and detain them, they cannot, I say, go about their more necessary business, stave off or extricate themselves, but are ever musing, melancholising, and carried along." Burton's language hints at the experience he is describing: each word spills into the next one, just as "bewitching thoughts" crowd into the sufferer's mind.

Pleasurable or "sweet" melancholy is only

Moments of melancholy

RIGHT: **A melancholic woman in an early 17th-century painting. Melancholic thoughts, Burton counselled, could start off pleasantly enough but would soon crowd the sufferer's mind**

BELOW: **Melancholics were advised against eating hare, as they were known as solitary animals**

BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY

one side of the coin. On the other is anguish, desperation, inescapable sorrow and terror. Burton charts the many variations of this dangerous illness in his book, through the stories of those who suffered from it as well as the prescriptions given by Renaissance physicians. *The Anatomy of Melancholy* takes its subject seriously: Burton ambitiously attempts to delineate the wide contours of mental suffering, as they had been understood from antiquity up to the 17th century.

Melancholy is a mental disorder that, writes Burton, is rooted in the body. The term literally means "black bile", one of the four humours of the human body, according to ancient Greek physiology. In humoral theory, blood is hot and wet, yellow bile (or choler) is hot and dry, phlegm is cold and wet, and black bile (or melancholy) is cold and dry. These four humours are essential for living, and a healthy person maintains them in a perfect balance. But most people have a predominance of one humour, which influences not only their physical health but also their personality. As people get older, they lose some of their natural heat and moisture. This means that, while young people might be prone to the anger and passionate moods triggered by choler, older people are less hot-tempered but also tend to be more melancholic: sad, solitary and timorous.

Older people were, Burton believed, less hot-tempered but more prone to melancholy: sad, solitary and timorous

It is not simply an excess of black bile that causes melancholy: all of the humours, on their own or in combination, can cause the condition. As Galenic medical theory (so named after the ancient Greek physician Aelius Galenus) explains it, this is because the humours can become corrupted or burnt through sickness or bad living, producing vapours that travel to the brain and affect the imagination. This can then produce different varieties of melancholy, corresponding to the original humour. For example, while a sanguine person – someone whose humoral complexion is dominated by blood – is characteristically cheerful, a sanguine melancholic is unable to restrain his hilarity.

Such was the case of a man called Brunsellius, who, Burton tells us, was sitting at church one day when a woman fell asleep during a sermon and fell off a bench. While most of the people who saw it laughed, the sanguine melancholic Brunsellius was so overcome that "for three whole days after he did nothing but laugh, by which means he was much weakened".

Too much "chamber-work"

Behaviour and habits could alter the "complexion" or balance of humours in the body, especially anything that used up the body's heat and moisture – such as through sweating or riotous living. In extreme cases, this could lead not just to melancholy but to outright madness. For instance, Burton charts the case of a man in Italy who "married a young wife in a hot summer, and so dried himself with chamber-work, that he became in short space from melancholy, mad". The older man's lust affected not only his body, but also his state of mind.

Just as too much sex could cause melancholy, so could other kinds of excess. Burton tells the cautionary tale of a group of young men in Agrigento in Sicily who spent a long session drinking in a tavern, until they became convinced they were in a ship during a storm. To prevent shipwreck, they started to throw the furniture out of the tavern's windows into "the sea". Hauled before the magistrate, they knelt before him as a sea god, beseeching him to be merciful to them in return for which they would build him an altar when they reached land.

And it was not simply the quantity of what you drank or ate that might put you at risk of melancholy. Burton gathers a long list of food and drink that provoke excessive black bile. Dark meats such as venison, beef and goat are notorious for causing melancholy, he notes, as is hare: "a black meat, melancholy, and hard of digestion", which breeds nightmares. The fact that hares are typically solitary animals is significant, too, since melancholics tend to prefer their own company to that of others.

Other, less obvious things would also be off the menu if you wanted to avoid melancholy, among them cheese, melons, fish, root vegetables, pigeons, salad, cider and sherry. By the time Burton's catalogue is finished, it seems that there is little left that is safe to eat. However, Burton does give an exception that he calls "Cardan's rule", after the 16th-century Italian polymath Girolamo Cardano: "To follow our disposition and appetite in some things is not amiss; to eat sometimes of a dish that is hurtful, if we have an extraordinary liking to it." In other words, a little bit of what you fancy does you good.

Good company

Among the reasons why *The Anatomy of Melancholy* has proven popular is that Burton's advice for dealing with this pervasive condition is often wise and humane. He may be distilling hundreds of years' worth of learned medical theory, but he also tells his readers simple things like "hope the best" and – his very last piece of advice in the book – "be not solitary, be not idle". While the *Anatomy* is a huge and unwieldy self-help book, it is also practical. Burton wants his readers to get better, not to be gripped by the sufferings of a condition that he himself knows well.

In the 400 years since the *Anatomy*'s first appearance, readers have been puzzled, entertained, frustrated and absorbed by Burton's book and the disease at its centre. It has provided inspiration for Romantic poets, source material for novelists from Laurence Sterne to George Eliot to Philip Pullman, and a rich diversion for many.

The *Anatomy*'s subject may have slipped from official diagnoses of mental health conditions, but melancholy still resonates in our own time. Perhaps what we can learn most from the way Burton and his Renaissance contemporaries treated this condition is its all-encompassing nature. Ranging through so many different symptoms – from sadness and terror to delusion, from despondency to wild exuberance – melancholy stands as a marker for the breadth of human fragility to which everyone was and is susceptible.

For Burton and his Renaissance contemporaries, melancholy revealed how people's bodies, minds and spirits were intimately interlinked, so much so that grief could show itself in a skin rash, or a physical sickness in an unshakeable low mood. As Burton concludes – though far from hopelessly – melancholy touches us all, for it is no more or less than "the character of mortality". H

Dr Mary Ann Lund is associate professor of Renaissance English literature at the University of Leicester. She is the author of *A User's Guide to Melancholy* (Cambridge, February 2021)

LISTEN To listen to the BBC Radio 4 series **The New Anatomy of Melancholy**, inspired by Robert Burton's book, go to *bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000j1jq/episodes/player*

ALAMY

1

Spades, soil and sisterhood

The 1930s was a golden age of female archaeologists, with networks of accomplished excavators and academics stretching across the globe. **Rebecca Wragg Sykes** introduces a cadre of pioneering "trowelblazers" who, in the face of widespread sexism, achieved huge success in the field

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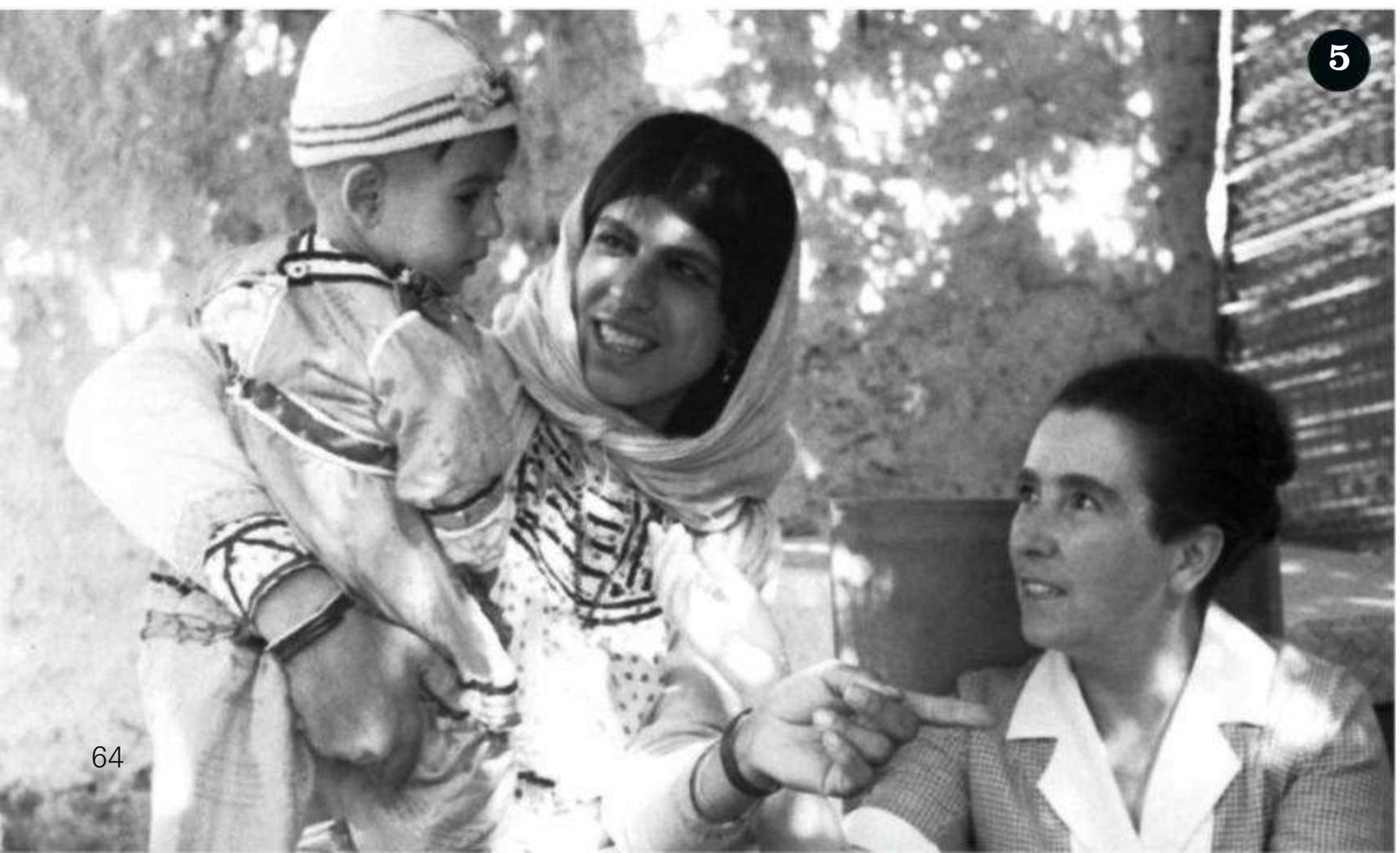
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WOMEN AT WORK

1 Margaret Murray (second left) supervises the unwrapping of an Egyptian mummy in 1908

2 Peggy Preston (portrayed as Peggy Piggott in recent film *The Dig*) examines pieces unearthed at Whitehawk Camp, East Sussex in 1935

3 Tessa Verney Wheeler at work on the excavations of the Roman city of Verulamium, on the outskirts of St Albans, in the 1930s

4 Gertrude Caton Thompson (left) with fellow archaeologist Elinor Gardner and explorer Freya Stark (centre) in the Hadhramaut region of Arabia

5 Dorothy Garrod (right) with local field assistant Yusra in Palestine, 1932. Garrod regarded Yusra as expert at sorting artefacts from debris

6 Kathleen Kenyon at the Roman Verulamium site (in 1934), where she initially trained with Verney Wheeler, and later published on the amphitheatre

7 Mary Leakey and her husband, Louis, study skull fragments from early human ancestors in Kenya, 1959

The Dig, a cinematic retelling of the story of the 1939 Sutton Hoo excavation, was among this year's cultural highlights for history fans – indeed, for anyone who loves a great true story. The film focuses on the work that unearthed one of Britain's most breathtaking archaeological finds: an ancient ship burial that had lain beneath a huge mound in Suffolk for 13 centuries. *The Dig* captures the excitement of excavation, and features impressively accurate depictions of both the ship and the tools used by those involved. Yet it fails dismally in one key aspect: its depiction of pioneering archaeologist Peggy Piggott, better known today by her later married name, Margaret Guido.

In the film, she is the only woman shown on the dig team at Sutton Hoo, and is portrayed as a bumbling sidekick to her more senior colleagues. In reality, though not yet 30 at the time, she was already highly experienced, with a brace of digs and even an excavation directorship under her belt.

That misjudgment matters – not just for the sake of accuracy about one individual but, by extension, for the representation of female archaeologists in the 1930s. Everyone excavating at Sutton Hoo alongside Peggy that summer would, for example, have been aware that a woman had just been appointed Disney professor of archaeology at the University of Cambridge: Dorothy Garrod – the first female Oxbridge professor in *any* subject.

Margaret Guido (centre) – then known as Peggy Piggott – at the 1939 Sutton Hoo excavation. By that time she had already garnered much experience and skill

Past masters

In fact, neither Garrod nor Piggott were exceptions in the field at that time. Because the period was something of a golden age for "trowelblazers", whose success was rooted in the efforts of predecessors working more than a century earlier.

Born in Scotland in 1811, Christian Maclagan can justifiably be called Britain's first female archaeologist. An independent character, she undertook her own research and excavation, wrote multiple papers and in 1871 was one of the first two "Lady Associates" of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland – decades before that organisation began electing women as fellows. She apparently expressed her opinion on that situation thus: "If I am not good enough to sit down at your table, I am too good to stand in the hall."

The other female "associate" of 1871 was an actual lady. No mere collector of antiquities, Lady Alicia Scott directed her own excavations and published her findings. Things were slower south of the border. It wasn't until 1920 that the Society of Antiquaries of London admitted any women, one of the first female fellows being the respected excavator and poet Nina Layard.

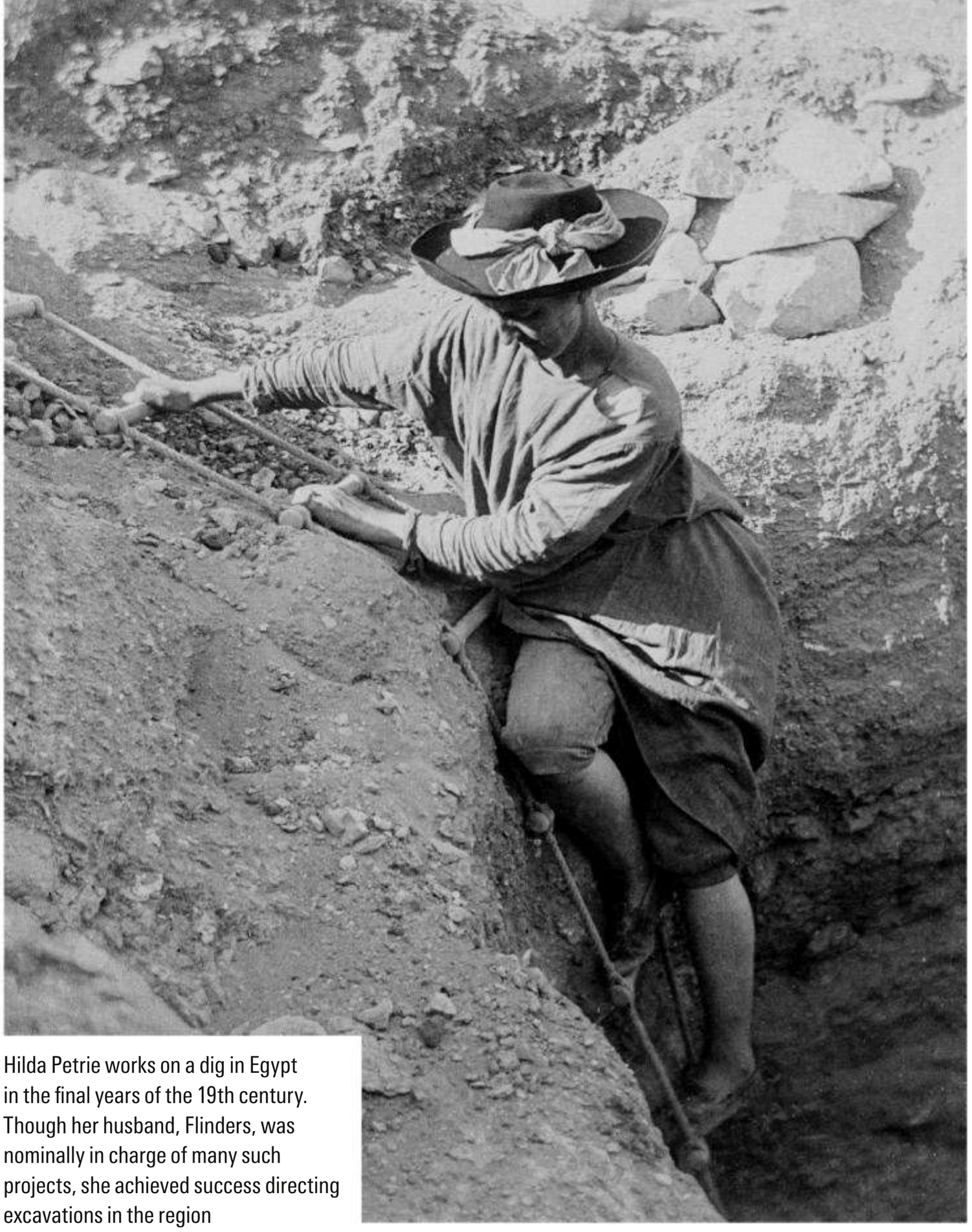
Despite expertise and success, women faced the belittling of their qualifications and status

Peggy Piggott (later Margaret Guido), played by Lily James in the film *The Dig*, in which she is erroneously portrayed as a bumbling sidekick

More pioneers followed. The first female archaeology lecturer was the diminutive yet indomitable Margaret Murray, who studied – then, from 1898, taught – Egyptology at University College London. She also trained and provided inspiration for the cohort of women who came next. One such was Gertrude Caton Thompson, who became so well regarded professionally that she was reputedly considered for the Cambridge professorship to which her good friend Dorothy Garrod was appointed in 1939.

Another studying at UCL between 1911 and 1914 was Tessa Verney Wheeler. Following her degree, she initially became keeper of archaeology in the National Museum of Wales, later gaining a reputation as an accomplished excavator. In 1928 she returned to London as a lecturer at the then-called London Museum where, with her husband Mortimer, she co-founded the

NETFLIX/THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Hilda Petrie works on a dig in Egypt in the final years of the 19th century. Though her husband, Flinders, was nominally in charge of many such projects, she achieved success directing excavations in the region

BRIDGEMAN

celebrated Institute of Archaeology.

Verney Wheeler's own proteges were legion. Among them was Mary Leakey, who transferred the excavation skills she learned first from Tessa – and, additionally, from another woman, Dorothy Liddell – to early hominin sites in Africa, where she made a number of pivotal discoveries.

Then there was the young woman who went on to find the first gold at Sutton Hoo. Born Margaret Preston, she married fellow archaeologist Stuart Piggott in 1936, and later became Margaret Guido. In the 1930s she studied for a diploma at Cambridge – which didn't offer full degrees to women till 1948 – then trained with Verney Wheeler in London. This relationship was clearly important: decades after Verney Wheeler's early death in 1936, Guido dedicated her massive work on ancient glass beads to her memory.

What happened to that young archaeologist after Sutton Hoo? During the Second World War she excavated extensively for the Ministry of Works, she was elected a fellow of both Societies of Antiquaries, and in 1946 moved to Edinburgh, where her first husband was appointed professor. Even without an academic position of her own, she continued excavating and made an enormous contribution to British prehistory during this period.

When her marriage ended in the 1950s, she was left without a professional framework and moved to Sicily, where she met her second husband, Luigi Guido. Yet she didn't give up archaeology, and went on to further great achievements – though she was never accorded the same honours as Stuart Piggott, who'd been at her side back at Sutton Hoo.

Systemic sexism

Margaret Guido's difficulties were personal but also systemic. The archaeologist Dr Rachel Pope has observed how in the postwar decades a slew of lectureships, chairs and other senior academic roles became ever more skewed towards men, even those relatively recently graduated.

This echoed a wider societal pushback against the professional liberties women had come to enjoy – a trend to usher women back towards more domestic roles. Careers increasingly became seen as incompatible with marriage. Some women active in archaeology, such as Guido, did manage to continue working independently; others kept a toehold through collaborations with men.

One woman who inhabited a marginal space in professional terms, yet who nevertheless was central to key archaeological research, was Mary Boyle. Born in Scotland in 1881, she came to archaeology relatively late in life after a chance 1912 meeting with Miles Burkitt, later the first British lecturer in prehistoric archaeology. She then worked as his "literary secretary" – though, as he noted, this involved editing as well as typing.

Through him, Boyle encountered one of Europe's foremost prehistorians, the Abbé Breuil, who in 1920 apparently asked her: "Why [did] you come to Cambridge to learn prehistory from my pupil when you might come to Paris and learn it from me?"

Within a few years she did just that, initially editing and translating but soon becoming a field assistant. Her arms would have ached as she stood holding paper and light in dark and silent caves while Breuil traced depictions of animals painted long ago on walls of rock.

Boyle and Breuil collaborated closely for almost four decades, and some of her poetry clearly references these experiences:

A world of mammoth, reindeer, bison, horse,
Drawn one on other, each pursues its course
Enchanted in the subterranean halls.
Standing I listen, will the shadow's edge
Tremble and footsteps pad on rocky floor?

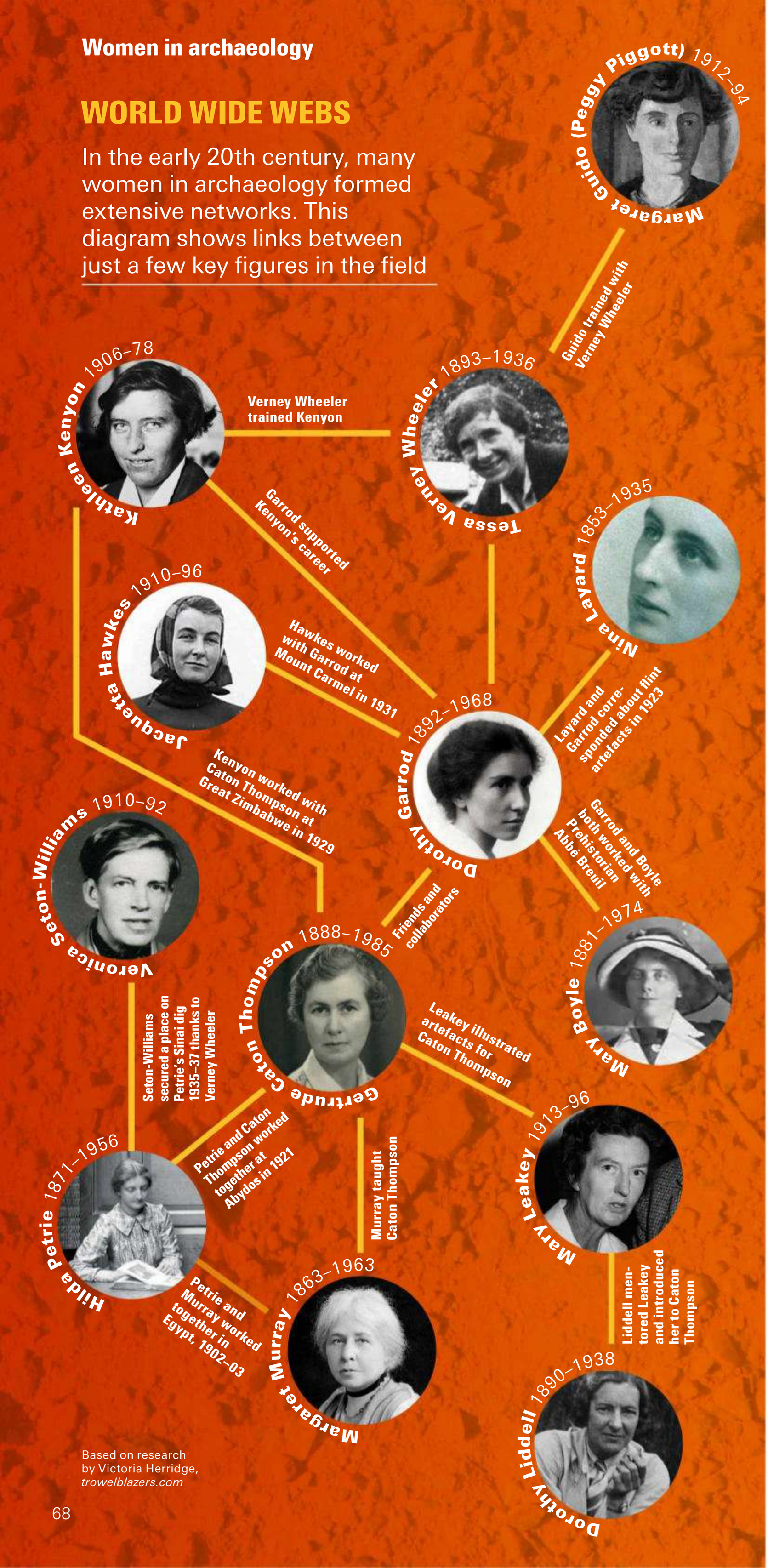
Boyle possibly met Garrod, who was 11 years her junior, in Cambridge while the latter was reading history, but they must certainly have encountered each other later in France through their common work with Breuil. Nonetheless, whereas Garrod was officially the Abbé's pupil, and Breuil referred to her as "his righthand man", Boyle was categorised differently by others – and even by herself – as his "secretary". She described her time with Breuil as a "close companionship… serene comradeship", though at the same time she was careful to emphasise the collaborative nature of their endeavours.

Despite often hard-won expertise and many successes, female archaeologists in the decades around the 1930s still routinely faced the belittling of their qualifications and status. Even with her professorship at Cambridge, for almost a decade Garrod was not granted full membership of the university, denied the right to speak or vote on institutional matters.

Sexism is also clear in newspaper reporting of the time. Discussing a parking offence, of all things, a newspaper referred to Garrod – the "new Cambridge woman professor of archaeology" – as "Miss", despite her two

WORLD WIDE WEBS

In the early 20th century, many women in archaeology formed extensive networks. This diagram shows links between just a few key figures in the field


Margaret Guido (Peggy Piggott) 1912–94
Guido trained with Verney Wheeler
Kathleen Kenyon 1906–78
Verney Wheeler trained Kenyon
Tessa Verney Wheeler 1893–1936
Garrod supported Kenyon's career
Nina Layard 1853–1935
Jacquetta Hawkes 1910–96
Hawkes worked with Garrod at Mount Carmel in 1931
Dorothy Garrod 1892–1968
Layard and Garrod corresponded about flint artefacts in 1923
Kenyon worked with Caton Thompson at Great Zimbabwe in 1929
Garrod and Boyle both worked with Prehistorian Abbé Breuil
Veronica Seton-Williams 1910–92
Friends and collaborators
Gertrude Caton Thompson 1888–1985
Mary Boyle 1881–1974
Seton-Williams secured a place on Petrie's Sinai dig 1935–37 thanks to Verney Wheeler
Leakey illustrated artefacts for Caton Thompson
Petrie and Caton Thompson worked together at Abydos in 1921
Mary Leakey 1913–96
Hilda Petrie 1871–1956
Murray taught Caton Thompson
Liddell mentored Leakey and introduced her to Caton Thompson
Petrie and Murray worked together in Egypt, 1902–03
Margaret Murray 1863–1963
Dorothy Liddell 1890–1938

Based on research by Victoria Herridge, *trowelblazers.com*

honorary doctorates. "GIRL EXCAVATORS" honked a 1930 *Daily Mail* headline for a story featuring the then 37-year-old Tessa Verney Wheeler. And the caption of a photograph showing the later Margaret Guido *directing* her own dig in 1937 listed her merely as "Mrs Stuart Piggott".

Men behaving badly

Such attitudes were shared by some of these women's male colleagues, too. As an example, consider the anthropologist Henry Field; he knew Garrod well, having undertaken training alongside her in Spain with Breuil before he became curator of the Field Museum in Chicago. Yet his memoir refers to her as one of "the girls", even though Garrod was a decade older and considerably more experienced than him at the time. An even more unsavoury window into attitudes at the time is revealed by his comments about the "tight-fitting breeches" of the other woman on the same field trip, a Mrs Milton.

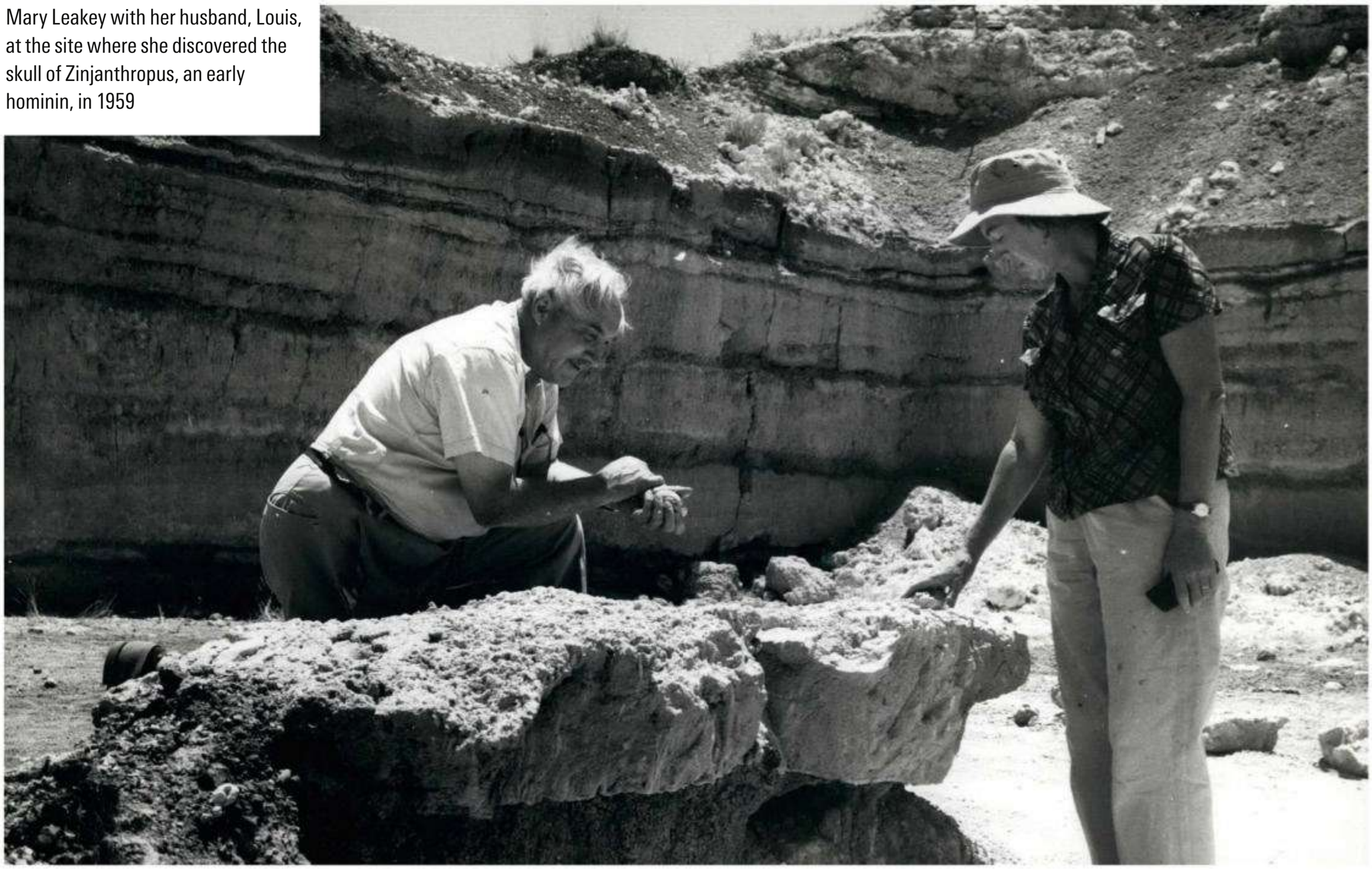
This kind of chauvinism is perhaps one reason why so many women in archaeology worked together so often during this period, whether collaborating, training or mentoring. The existence of dense, wide-reaching female networks is one of the most striking aspects to have emerged from the TrowelBlazers project (*trowelblazers.com*), co-founded by myself and three other women, Victoria Herridge, Brenna Hassett and Suzanne Pilaar Birch.

As our illustration of one network (left) shows, it's fascinating to play a kind of "six degrees of separation" game tracing connections between female archaeologists of the era. As an example, consider Margaret Murray. In the early 1900s she worked in Egypt alongside Hilda Petrie, who was directing an excavation of the Osireion temple. (Petrie's husband, Flinders, was nominally in charge of the wider project, but a number of women took part in and collaborated on the dig.)

Murray also knew Verney Wheeler and worked with Caton Thompson who, in 1929, selected two young women to accompany her for a major fieldwork project at the medieval site of Great Zimbabwe in southern Africa. One of the trainees was Kathleen Kenyon, another protege of Verney Wheeler; Kenyon went on to become director of the Institute of Archaeology, trained generations more women on her own digs, and is connected to present-day archaeologists through these webs of mentoring and research.

As one looks deeper, other patterns become clear. Social privilege played a key role in determining which women had the opportunity to pursue an interest in archaeology. Wealth was especially crucial: Christian Maclagan, for example, received a significant inheritance that allowed her to remain

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES/ST ALBANS MUSEUM/EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY/UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD



Mary Leakey with her husband, Louis, at the site where she discovered the skull of Zinjanthropus, an early hominin, in 1959

ALAMY

independent (and a "Miss" – rather than marrying, she chose to live with another woman, Jessie Colvin). The child-free Lady Scott also developed her archaeological interest on being left a rich widow. And though Margaret Murray was employed in social work before becoming a lecturer, her wealthy background kept her secure and meant she had no need to marry. Similarly, Dorothy Garrod was from a well-to-do, intellectual family, and remained single after her fiancé was killed in the First World War.

In contrast, Tessa Verney Wheeler came from a less high-status background. Born in South Africa in 1893, little is known about her early life, though an interest in the past is clear – it was while studying history that she met her husband, Mortimer Wheeler. However, regardless of her obvious talent as a field director and lecturer, her wider career remained tethered and subordinate to his. Like Verney Wheeler, Margaret Guido met her first husband, Stuart Piggott, while both were students, and went on to collaborate with him; however, her family were of "independent means", which probably helped her to maintain control over her research activity.

Political context

When thinking about archaeology in the 1930s, it's vital to also consider the wider political context. Opportunities existed for British women that were out of the reach of those living under colonial rule, even when they were working on the same excavations.

Social privilege played a key role in determining which women could pursue an interest in archaeology

A striking example is the work at Mount Carmel, in British-mandated Palestine (now in northern Israel), directed by Garrod from 1929. Apparently by chance, the first season featured an all-women team of westerners, who seem to have revelled in the collegiate atmosphere and freedom of digging together. Then, in 1932, Garrod invited her most promising young student, Jacquetta Hawkes, to the site. Archive photographs show the pair with that year's star discovery: the skeleton of a female Neanderthal. Like Boyle, Hawkes expressed this experience through poetry.

In fact, though, it was neither Hawkes nor Garrod who had found the skeleton but another woman – and we know only her first name: Yusra. That's because she was one of the local Palestinian women employed for the fine work of sorting artefacts from debris. Garrod regarded her as the most expert in this work, and in total they worked together for six years at multiple sites. A photograph (see page 64)shows obvious friendliness between them, and it seems Yusra wished to further pursue archaeology. Yet in contrast to Hawkes, who became a celebrated author, Yusra's fate is unknown beyond the fact that her village was one of those destroyed in 1948 during the war that ravaged the region.

The sheer number of women working during the 1930s, their connections to each other and their contributions to archaeology are undeniable. Yet it's just as important to recognise those who were unable to pursue – or even discover – an interest in the past. That dual legacy of achievement and exclusion is still evident today in terms of representation within the discipline – so it's crucial that the stories of trowelblazers from all backgrounds are shared. H

Rebecca Wragg Sykes is an archaeologist, author and co-founder of TrowelBlazers, which highlights women in archaeology, geology and palaeontology (*trowelblazers.com*). She has recently appeared on our HistoryExtra podcast to discuss Mary Anning, and the Neanderthals. *historyextra.com/podcast*

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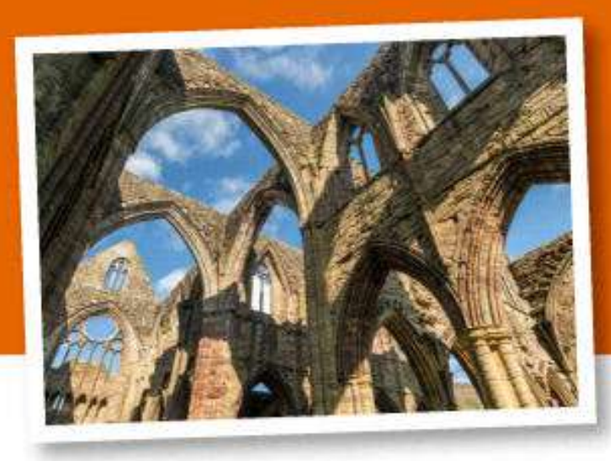
BOOKS

TUDORS

“The ramifications were probably greater for local communities than for national elites”

Hugh Willmott praises a new account of the dissolution of the monasteries › page 76



MEDIEVAL

“This is a highly engaging account of what we do, and don’t, know about sexual culture in the Middle Ages”

Alicia Spencer-Hall reviews an intimate look at the medieval era › page 81

INDUSTRY

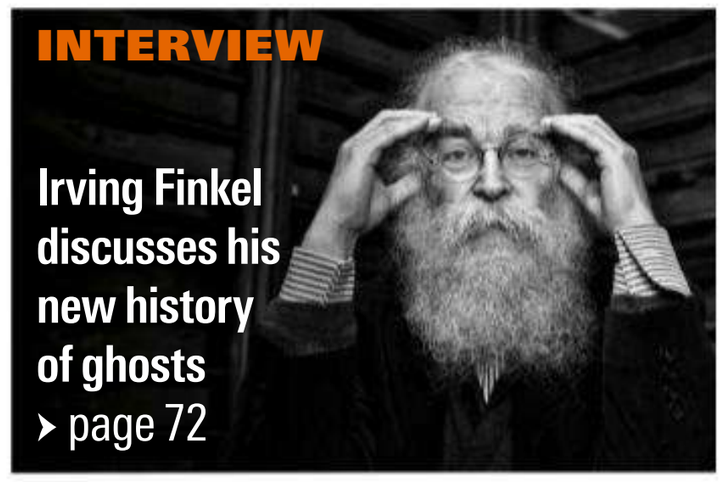
“Jeremy Paxman weaves the story of coal into that of the two world wars and the rise of the unions”

Emma Griffin on the author and broadcaster’s take on how coal powered Britain › page 78

CULTURAL

“Each chapter focuses on a colour with a claim to being fundamental to human experience”

Joad Raymond on a study of seven shades that shaped history › page 79



INTERVIEW

Irving Finkel discusses his new history of ghosts › page 72

ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN/CAROLINE MARDON

INTERVIEW / IRVING FINKEL

"Ghosts were taken for granted as part of everyday Mesopotamian life"

IRVING FINKEL speaks to Ellie Cawthorne about his new book, which transports us to ancient Mesopotamia to uncover the earliest written evidence of a belief in ghosts

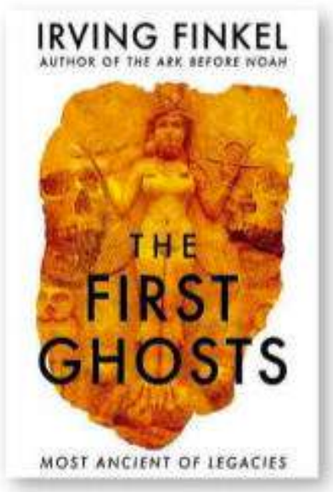
ON THE EI PODCAST

Ellie Cawthorne: You argue that "most, possibly even all, human beings everywhere truly believe in ghosts". Why do you think humans are inclined to believe that the dead might return to exist among us?

Irving Finkel: In the modern world, ghosts have a funny status. Most people don't wear their ghosts on their sleeves, because there's a good chance they'd be branded idiots for believing in such things. But when you look into the matter historically, we have plenty of testimonies concerning ghosts, coming from all over the world and covering a huge span of time. They date right back to the very first written material that we have – cuneiform tablets from ancient Mesopotamia, in what is now Iraq, developed before 3000 BC. And this earliest written evidence is what I focus on in my book.

Arguably, you can trace this ghost business back even farther than the beginning of writing. I would posit that the concept of something hanging around after death goes back to the very dawn of mankind. Take as an example a Neanderthal burial in which the body is laid out in a prepared grave, in a particular position, alongside special bits and pieces. The point here is this: if you bury somebody in the ground to get rid of them because they're smelly and dangerous, that's one thing. But burying them in a special way with goods implies that your expectation is that, once the horrible bodily chemicals have disappeared, something – most likely the essence of the person – comes out of the body and goes on to some kind of afterlife. And my idea is this: if you're willing to accept that someone's spirit can disappear over there, it's a short step to believing that it can come back again.

I think we're hardwired to believe in ghosts. The most austere, clever scientist in two white coats might look at you as if you're crazy – but if you make them jump, they will shiver just like everybody else. It's beneath the skin.



The First Ghosts: Most Ancient of Legacies
by Irving Finkel
(Hodder & Stoughton, 368 pages, £25)

Your book focuses on the very first writings on ghosts, on ancient Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets. Why are they so illuminating to study?

One of the reasons I wrote this book is that there is a general feeling that ghosts were invented in the 19th century, or perhaps in the Middle Ages. Not many writers even talk about the marvellous stuff on ghosts from Greece and Rome, let alone Mesopotamia [which included Babylonian, Sumerian and Assyrian cultures]. So I thought that I would put the Mesopotamians back on the ghost map to show that these beliefs are truly old and unchanging.

If you learn to read Babylonian – it'll only take you 20 years – and you translate these messages written on cuneiform tablets, you'll find it extraordinary just how familiar the world of ghosts that emerges from them is. The underlying story is still fairly recognisable to us today: if a ghost is unhappy in the underworld – perhaps if they had a miserable death, or didn't get the offerings they were due – they could come back. And they could make living people jump or pull their hair, follow them around or make them ill – all kinds of things.

You state that ghosts were "not symbols or metaphors, but literal realities" in Mesopotamia. How so?

From the king on the throne to the beggar in the street, the whole population didn't just *believe* in ghosts – they took them for granted as a fact of life. Ghosts were just part of the everyday scenario, alongside all the other things you had to worry about, like children, housing, warfare and disease.

And since ghosts were an everyday reality, they also called for the undertaking of everyday chores. A household's oldest son was responsible for making offerings of food and drink to his dead family, who were often buried under the courtyard of the family home. They needed water and food because there was an understanding that the underworld wasn't very hospitable. Arriving there was a bit like arriving at an Airbnb with no towels or electricity. People had a responsibility to look after the ghosts of their relatives in the sense of reciting prayers in their honour, remembering them, talking about them.

The explanations provided for ghosts returning were not metaphorical but literal – there's a big difference. The Mesopotamians didn't speak about them in elusive poetics but as something grounded in reality. In many parts of the world, this attitude survives unchanged. In villages in India, you can ask people about local ghosts and they'll have 100 stories to share immediately.

How did belief in ghosts connect to the wider religious system in ancient Mesopotamia?

When we talk about deities in the ancient world, "religion" isn't necessarily the best word for the system. The Mesopotamians didn't have a word for "religion", because their system of gods and goddesses was more than that – it was all-pervading. They had a huge pantheon of deities, and in some ways interactions with ghosts did trade on this system. If someone returned from the dead, a priest or exorcist would be recruited to drive the ghost back. These priests would call on the power of the gods, invoking names such as Ishtar the Goddess of Love to help them to deal with ghosts. On the whole, though, dealing with

SARAH LEE-EYEVINE

PROFILE

Irving Finkel is curator of ancient Mesopotamian script, languages and cultures at the British Museum. His research specialities include the study of cuneiform script and the history of board games, and among his previous books is *The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2014)

the dead was slightly unrelated to the prevailing main religion. It wasn't centrally what we would call a religious matter but more of a traditional matter.

Were ghosts always figures to be frightened of?
Another jolly good question, because in the later tradition we think of ghosts mainly as clanking ghouls in hotel rooms, bearing frightening messages. In Mesopotamia, people could be startled and sometimes made unhappy by ghosts; if you saw a ghost, on the whole it wasn't good news – it generally meant that there was a danger that you needed to do something about.

However, because people tended to live in extended families, with their relatives and ancestors buried directly under the family home, so quite often you were dealing with a familial ghost. And I feel that the basic position towards a ghost from your own stock was a kind of sympathy. Of course, if that sympathy didn't work, you could always pay an exorcist to get rid of them with more heavy-duty tools.

In addition, there were also lots of unknown ghosts floating about who were nothing to do with your family, and who might be very dangerous indeed. They could go into your ear, torment you and make you very ill. Imagine that after a battle, for example, there'd be thousands of dead soldiers who hadn't been buried properly, floating about. And the first thing they might do is head to Babylon and make life hell for anybody still living there.

Can you give some examples of the types of ghost spells found on cuneiform tablets?
Babylonian scribes described a whole slew of simple spells and complicated rituals to get rid of ghosts. Some of these rely on lists of all of the different kinds of ghosts – a ghost who died in a fire, say, or a ghost who was run over by a chariot or drowned in a well or died in childbirth. Part of the spell to get rid of them would involve reading out this list, essentially saying: "Whether you are *this* type of ghost, or *that* type of ghost, we know who you are. Go back where you belong!" Identification of a troublesome ghost was a means of gaining power over it.

Another tablet contains a list detailing what it meant if you saw a ghost. For example, if you saw a ghost in the bedroom, it could mean that your uncle was going to die, or you were about to lose all your money. Those are grim portents, but there were specialists who could use concomitant forms of magic to dispel the threat. And an omen wasn't a fixed fate but more like something in the air.

One of my favourite spells is designed to help someone who keeps seeing a ghost. They have to recite a spell that essentially says: "You, who keep persecuting me, leave me alone – I'm not going to Kutha." That was a city in Babylonia, the location of the entrance to the underworld. It had a big temple through which gods and ghosts came up. You can imagine ghosts beckoning with a bony finger, saying to a living person: "Come with us." The person who has been seeing a ghost then calls on all these goddesses to back them up. It's fantastic, because it demonstrates that, though the gods are very busy, they will come over and thwack a ghost if needed. It's basically a way of telling the ghost: "Piss off back to your underworld gloom!"

"One gets the impression of all the ghosts lurking in the gloomy underworld in ever-increasing numbers, swaying with their shoulders together like dusty penguins"

What can you tell us about the underworld?
One of the main sources of information on this is a marvellous series of literary texts describing the descent of the beautiful goddess Inanna into the underworld. On a quest to rescue her lover, who is imprisoned there, she passes through seven gates, each manned by ferocious gatekeepers. Inanna journeys all the way down to the underworld, where her sister is queen, in order to sort out this problem. When she gets there, it's very gloomy indeed – there's no real light. All of the ghosts are lurking, their numbers increasing every minute as more people die. We're told in the Akkadian *Gilgamesh Epic* that "dust is their sustenance, clay their food. They see no light, dwelling in darkness. They are clad like birds, with wings as garments." One gets the impression of them all swaying with their shoulders together like dusty penguins. The lack of food and drink explains the evolution of a ritual of pouring out drinks and offering food for the dead – it theoretically went down to sustain them in the underworld.

This wasn't hell in the sense of a burning pit with pitchforks and laughing devils pulling your nose. It was more a kind of interregnum – a kind of dreadful waiting place in which nobody's quite certain what they're waiting for. Understanding this adds a whole different dimension to the idea that ghosts want to return. If you were trapped down there, wouldn't you want to go back to the sunny world of ancient Iraq?

Another crucial point to understand is that the Mesopotamian afterlife didn't have a moral dimension: there was no concept that bad behaviour in this life meant a terrible time to come in the next. In my opinion, that connection was a disastrous invention because it dislocated responsibility – everybody spent the whole of their lives fretting about the consequences of their actions after death. The Mesopotamians didn't have that trouble.

Demons and deities
A relief from Babylonia, c19th–18th century BC, showing a female figure with wings and reptilian feet – similar to the baby-eating demoness Lamashtu

ALAMY

You've found spells for necromancy. How – and why – would anyone bring people back from the dead?
Necromancy wasn't about bringing people permanently back to life so much as summoning them temporarily to get some answers.

The Mesopotamians believed, as many people do today, that ghosts were in possession of a knowledge of the future. It was understood that if a ghost appeared and didn't say anything, they wanted to communicate something. So there were spells to try to encourage a ghost to answer questions. Sometimes this would require a full-blown ritual in which you procured the skull of the

Adventures in the underworld
An Akkadian cylinder seal portraying Mesopotamian deities, including the winged goddess Inanna. According to myth, she journeyed down to the underworld, which was ruled by her sister, to rescue her lover

AKG-IMAGES

person you wanted to interrogate – who might well be a family member, retrieved from under the floor. The skull was plonked on the table and covered in oil, while the exorcist burnt incense and called upon the Sun God to bring the person back up from the underworld. They would then enter the skull, and you could ask it questions. This ritual was probably terribly frightening, so I don't think you would do it in a flippant way. However cool and callous a person you might be, I think that staring at a skull until it began to speak would make you pretty jumpy.

After the ritual was over, and you'd hopefully got the answers you were after, you'd want to send the ghost back to the underworld jolly quickly. A safety clause was built in to the necromancy manual to help with this: underneath the spell to bring back a ghost, the scribe provided a whole load of spells to then get rid of them as soon as possible. The last thing you would want would be to bring up a ghost for a chat and then let them go off round the world causing mischief.

In the book you discuss how disrespecting the dead could be a political device. Can you give us an example of that?

It's very interesting to see what you might call political ghost-work at play. Take, for example, the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, one of the great rulers of antiquity. He had ongoing military trouble with the Elamites, in what is now Iran. In a particularly regrettable state of military fury, his troops ravaged the tombs of the old Elamite kings and scattered their bones, thereby condemning the dead rulers of Ashurbanipal's hated enemy to a state of eternal unrest. That intention – to impose eternal unrest on the Elamites – is expressly stated in the official Assyrian annals. This was not a metaphor or a clever use of language – it was jolly well what happened.

As well as ghosts, the Mesopotamians also believed in demons. What can you tell us about them?

The big difference between a demon and a ghost was that, whereas a ghost was a dead human being, a demon had an alien component. Demons were immortal: you could not kill one. If you were lucky, a ghost was not generally malevolent and wicked, more likely just miserable. I don't think you'd find a miserable demon. Demons had no heart – they were horribly evil.

Most demons were either a bit dragony or anthropomorphic – basically like human beings with other nasty characteristics thrown in. One of the worst of all was the demoness Lamashtu, the "baby snatcher", who liked consuming newborns. At first sight she looked like a woman, but get closer and she had wings, talons and reptilian feet – a very frightening mixture.

What can looking at these ancient Mesopotamian beliefs tell us about humanity's relationship with the idea of death more generally?

Ghosts are a persistent reality in human thinking, and it's always interesting to try to uncover when such long-running ideas started. I would argue that ghost beliefs are very difficult to expunge from our mindset because they've been there since the beginning, built into the human psyche. The idea of not being able to rest in peace if your life is lacking in resolution, or you met an unhappy or awkward end, is to be found absolutely all over the world.

One of the most exciting things about working on these texts was the empathy I felt with the Mesopotamians, for whom ghosts were a problem. I thought that the only way to write about this was with empathy – in other words, there was no point debating whether or not ghosts *really* existed, because for the Mesopotamians that was not a question worth asking. Instead I focused on looking at what Mesopotamians did *because* ghosts existed. That doesn't mean to say that I believe in ghosts personally; it's more of a way of finding a voice that you can recognise in these texts. And the voice that is distilled from these sources is still, I think, very vibrant. H

MORE FROM US

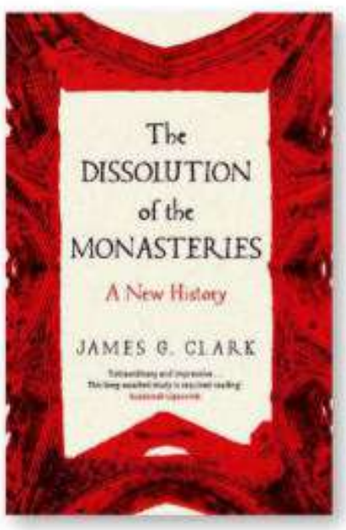
Listen to an extended version of this interview with Irving Finkel on our **podcast** at *historyextra.com/podcast*

Religious schisms Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire, which fell into ruin following the dissolution of the monasteries. James Clark charts the impact of that seismic event on families and communities

TUDOR

Faith and family

HUGH WILLMOTT recommends an authoritative re-examination of the dissolution of the monasteries that promises to become the standard reference work on the subject



The Dissolution of the Monasteries: A New History
by James Clark
Yale, 704 pages, £25

In choosing the title *The Dissolution of the Monasteries: A New History*, James Clark clearly states his aim: to revisit a topic that has largely fallen out of fashion in historical and Reformation studies. Some readers may wonder what new aspects of this seemingly well-known episode might justify such a sizeable treatment. They will be quickly disabused of the notion that there is nothing more to be said about the subject.

The introduction to Clark's book presents a comprehensive background to the Dissolution, rightly drawing attention to its European setting and marking it as distinct in scale and implementation. The author also highlights changing attitudes to the Dissolution, from the angered consternation of churchman and historian John Bale in the 1540s to the later indifference of the Elizabethan era and, ultimately, through to more recent academic treatment.

Discussion of the Dissolution has always been polarised among academic circles. Historian Geoffrey Baskerville characterised this division in 1937 as being between the so-called "scavenging party", whose members believed in the necessary and inevitable march of historical progress, and "merry Englanders", who portrayed a sentimental (and often ill-informed) view of the monasteries. This new work falls into neither camp, to its considerable merit.

The first part of the book sets the scene. Many accounts of the Dissolution largely overlook, or choose to ignore, the fact that monasteries had been an established part of Tudor life. Yet, as Clark highlights, understanding the extent to which they had become embedded in all levels of Tudor society is essential to appreciating the process by which they were then closed. After all, former gentry patrons of monasteries often became commissioners responsible for assessing the very same houses. And the longer-term ramifications of resulting closures were probably far greater for local communities than they were for the national elites.

Part two delves more deeply into the

ALAMY

politics of the Dissolution and the rapidly changing fortunes of the monasteries, some of which may have viewed the early reforms quite favourably. We are left with a clear picture of government policy being developed on the hoof; though the author wisely avoids drawing unhelpful analogies with modern times, the reader may see some similarities. What is conveyed well is the fact that on its initiation in the 1530s, no one – not even the king himself – could have predicted the final outcome of the Dissolution.

Perhaps the most important and original contribution can be found in the third and final part of the book, which explores the unexpected consequences of the Dissolution. The closures had far-reaching and long-term impacts not only on the social and political landscape but also on the physical one. Clark notes wryly that, upon the death of Elizabeth in 1603, maybe as many as half a dozen of the former religious houses were still functioning – so, in some sense, the monasteries outlived the extinction of the Tudor dynasty.

The one disappointment here is that the wealth of archaeological and architectural evidence for the Dissolution's aftermath is not given as much attention as it might. Frequent references are made in passing to specific sites or excavations, but such examples are used to reaffirm points rather than inform the debate. In particular, short consideration is given to the immediate impact of materials from ruined monasteries being recycled in other forms of architecture. Yet most monastic ruins surviving today are preserved only because they were converted into country houses, farms, company halls and even industrial complexes.

The author adopts an accessible (if at times florid) style that should appeal to a broad readership. For example, the oft-quoted account of Italian military engineer Giovanni Portinari's demolition of Lewes Priory using gunpowder is given almost novelistic treatment.

"Perhaps the sound of the blast was muffled by the walls of the chancel which the military engineer who laid charges of gunpowder had calculated to be at least five feet thick, although there was surely some reverberation in Southover [just to the north-west]," Clark writes. The reality was probably somewhat different. Archaeological excavations have revealed that most of Lewes's buildings, as was typical elsewhere, were brought down by the much more efficient method of undermining, albeit with equally devastating consequences. However, Clark's rendering does serve to make a more metaphorical point: that the sheer drama of the Dissolution resounded not only across Tudor England – its vibrations can also be felt in academic scholarship and popular culture today.

Overall, Clark's work is forensic in its investigation and presents original insight. In particular, although the lives and deaths of the usual suspects – the king, Thomas Cromwell, commissioners and greedy speculators – are still intertwined with the narrative, he moves the focus away to consider usually anonymous devout individuals and their relatives.

The results are revealing. We hear, for instance, one William Martyn bemoaning the lot of his daughter Alice, a former nun and head of her house. Not only did he have to supplement her pittance of a pension, but her life chances were also now so curtailed that he was moved to note regretfully: "I wode have my daughter more surely served [as a nun] for term of her lyfe." The Dissolution's harsh realities are brought home far more sharply by such accounts than by more traditional musings of, as Shakespeare notably put it, "bare ruined choirs".

> **"On its initiation in the 1530s, no one – not even the king himself – could have predicted the final outcome of the Dissolution"**

At a little more than 700 pages, this is not only an academically rigorous work but also an expansive one. It will deservedly become the standard textbook for the next generation of scholars and, by moving the focus more clearly onto the ordinary people of Tudor England, it makes a most valuable contribution. It avoids many of the rather tired polemics of past historical studies, although one can still glimpse Clark's feelings at particular moments.

With such a study now on the shelves, it might be tempting to suggest that there is little scope for further analysis of the Dissolution – yet I suspect that, in keeping with the events it describes, this book will provoke considerable discussion and debate for many years to come. And for that, too, it should be welcomed. H

Hugh Willmott is senior lecturer in European historical archaeology at the University of Sheffield and the author of *The Dissolution of the Monasteries in England and Wales* (Equinox Publishing, 2020)

CUNDILL HISTORY PRIZE/LIBI PEDER

AUTHORS ON THE PODCAST

Marie Favereau on the legacy of the Mongol empire

"This was a moment of globalisation that we have completely forgotten. We cannot understand the development of the world from the 16th century up to today, if we don't understand the Mongol period. This is really the beginning of something completely new. They put together communities, and they created new roads, they also created new trade rules."

Tyler Stovall on the links between freedom and racism

"Time and time again I came across a basic contradiction: nations that grounded themselves in the idea of freedom also frequently practised racist practices. The US, for example, championed its revolution against the British as a revolution for freedom, while at the same time practising slavery. And I decided that freedom had to be seen as a racialised idea – it was not available to everybody, that freedom was dependent on who you were."

Helen Batten on a Victorian performer and entrepreneur

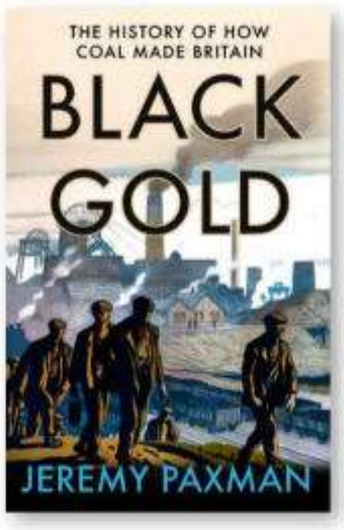
"When I was little, my nanna always used to tell us about a famous actress in our family. When I began to research her, I was blown away. From a very ordinary background, Emily managed to become not only a leading singer in music halls, but also a producer and director and then an impresario. And to cap it all, she wrote her memoir, and it was one of the bestselling books of 1898."

ON THE HISTORY EXTRA PODCAST

INDUSTRIAL

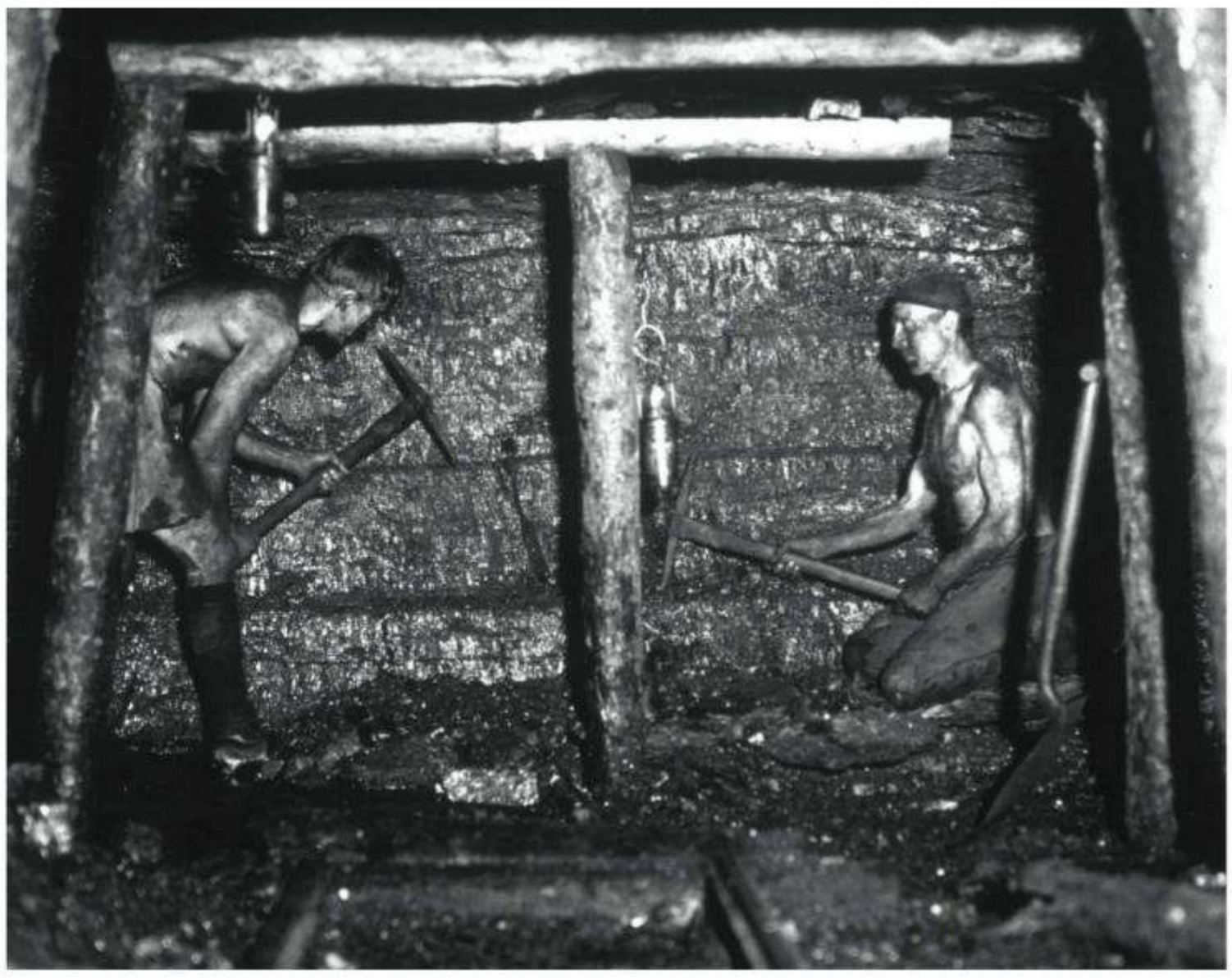
Buried treasure

EMMA GRIFFIN enjoys a new examination of the role of coal in shaping centuries of Britain's history, by one of the nation's most popular writers and presenters



Black Gold: The History of How Coal Made Britain
by Jeremy Paxman
William Collins,
320 pages, £25

In a grand historical sweep from the 16th century to the present day, Jeremy Paxman's latest book provides a new account of coal's role in the rise and (in some respects) fall of modern Britain. In his customary sharp, crisp prose, and with a particular focus on the past 250 years, he charts the way in which coal drove the British industrial revolution, transforming a small island into an industrial powerhouse at the head of the global economy. As he heads through the 20th century, Paxman weaves this history into that of the two world wars, the rise of the trade unions and the labour movement, and waves of social unrest and economic decline. *Black Gold* covers it all – and in the process takes a topic too often confined to the earnest pages of economic historians and turns it into a rich, colourful and highly readable narrative.



Deeper underground Miners in Tilmanstone Colliery in Kent, 1930. Jeremy Paxman's book "invites us to think more carefully about the changing place of coal in the lives of ordinary Britons", says Emma Griffin

From an eclectic mix of official and personal records, Paxman describes the arduous task of extracting coal from the ground, and sheds light on the men – and the women and children, too – who did the work. He dips into the 19th-century parliamentary commissions that sought, for the first time, to regulate the working conditions of all those labouring underground, to provide rich details of the lives of some of the poorest in society. Yet he also keeps a keen eye throughout on the myriad uses to which coal was put and the new technologies – steam engines, iron-making, railways – that helped to alter the very fabric of the economy and provided Britain with its economic edge through most of the 19th century. The rise of the steam ships, he reveals, not only enabled faster and cheaper shipping but also provided the foundation for a stronger navy and a stronger nation, and helped catapult Britain to world-power status.

In the 20th century, coal played its part in fortifying Britain's participation in two world wars and drove the rise of the labour movement – though it also created unsightly and unhealthy smog. Indeed, its pernicious impact upon the environment was becoming increasingly evident. Pit closures and the move towards cleaner fuels in the second half of the century are all covered, too. Paxman provides sensitive accounts of the impact of these developments on the communities that depended on mining for their wealth and wellbeing – not to mention their sense of purpose and identity.

> **"Coal drove the British industrial revolution, transforming a small island into an industrial powerhouse at the head of the global economy"**

Black Gold is lightly footnoted and provides references for those who want to explore the topic further. This is not, though, a book for the serious historian. Scholars will continue to pick over the relative importance of coal in the making of Britain's industrial revolution and of its place in the deindustrialisation of the northern towns of 20th-century Britain. Paxman is not seeking to contribute to these debates. Instead, this is emphatically a book for the general reader, inviting us to think more carefully about the changing place of coal in the lives of ordinary Britons. In this it succeeds, with all the aplomb that we have come to expect from one of the nation's most beloved popular writers. H

Emma Griffin is professor of modern British history at the University of East Anglia, and the author of *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy* (Yale, 2020)

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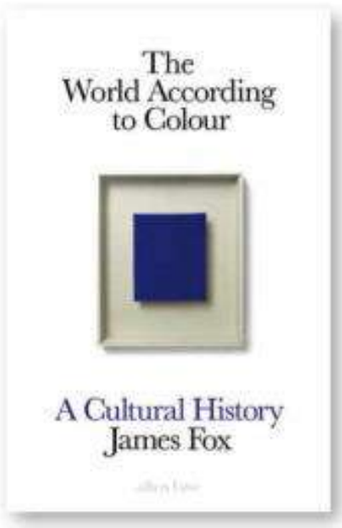
CULTURAL

Shades of meaning

JOAD RAYMOND on a look at the ways in which humanity has used colour to make sense of the world



The World According to Colour
by James Fox
Allen Lane, 320 pages, £25

Human culture attaches meaning to colours, then uses those colours to articulate and explore new meanings. In this brief, compelling book, James Fox shows that the meanings connected to particular colours aren't arbitrary but are instead materially, socially and culturally determined. Once black became equated with darkness (though in some ways it's anything but), its association with fear became cemented. In blue – hard to detach from the beauty of lapis lazuli in rings and Renaissance painting – lies discovery: of precious stones from the east, and of the Earth itself, viewed from space.

Purple is most striking for its rarity and evasiveness, the improbability of red encountering blue in the natural world. The powerful and astonishingly costly Tyrian purple, manufactured by crushing molluscs, disappeared with the fall of Constantinople in 1453, but the manufacture of synthetic purple pigments in the late 19th century revived the colour's lost power. As well as exemplifying the shift from natural to chemical, modern production of synthetic dyes also brought about a dialogue between ancient associations and contemporary industry.

Purple was long considered symbolic of power and privilege. Yet when industrial production – based on the ingenuity of British chemist William Henry Perkin, among others – introduced purple (plus mauve, lilac, magenta) to the masses it also brought pollution, and that hue acquired apocalyptic associations in literature and art.

Colours are – and have always been – embedded in such webs of meaning. The ways in which these meanings extend from nature through culture to politics are perhaps most visible in the colour green. Fox's essay on the shade begins with chlorophyll, passes through Mesoamerican agriculture and Islamic art before arriving at the colour's near-ubiquitous association with environmental politics.

The resonance of the word "green" hardly needs explanation today. But the response to pre-Raphaelite and, especially, Impressionist paintings provides evidence of how cultural and moral norms have always been attached to colours. When the artists of those movements pushed hues away from the prevailing cultural norms, they were accused of having nervous disorders, and condemned for supposedly rejecting not only the reality of the world around them but also aesthetic traditions. They were, of course, merely finding new ways of articulating contrast and tonal variation, and experimenting with the pigments and oils available to them.

One of a flurry of recent books on colour, Fox's is distinguished by his broad historical approach and by the diversity of perspectives and sources. Each of his seven chapters focuses on a colour with a claim to being fundamental in some way to human experience, taking readers through material physics and chemistry as well as fine arts, poetry, politics, philosophy and economics. The greatest pleasure of this book is the way Fox's essays move fluently between the material, moral and historical, from marble and chromium to racism, from Egyptian monotheism through saffron robes to JMW Turner. This is a book that makes you want to paint. H

Joad Raymond is professor of Renaissance studies at Queen Mary University of London

Rossetti's 1873 *La Ghirlandata*. James Fox explores how the use of colour in such pre-Raphaelite paintings sparked controversy

ALAMY

FROM FACT TO FICTION

The Red Monarch

Bella Ellis on the latest in her series that casts the Brontë sisters as detectives

What's the key idea behind your Brontë Mysteries books?
I was writing a novel set in the West Yorkshire village of Haworth, and considered including a cameo from the Brontë sisters [who wrote most of their novels in the village] exploring the same mystery as my heroine. At once I realised that the idea deserved its own platform, and the Brontë Mysteries were born. These bright, curious, determined women would have made brilliant sleuths!

At what point do we catch up with the Brontës in your latest novel?
It's summer 1846, and the sisters have just had their book of poetry published. They receive a letter from Anne's former pupil Lydia, who in my story is asking for help after her husband is abducted. Secretly, the siblings travel to London and unravel a network of organised evil stretching from the very top of society, entrapping the very lowest in its web.

How much did you draw on historical sources to capture their personalities and the times in which they lived?
I drew on extensive research, including Charlotte's letters and contemporary accounts. For example, Emily really was a crack shot with a flintlock pistol. From that beginning I wove fact and fiction together to create a story that takes the sisters into Dickensian London and the alluring world of theatre.

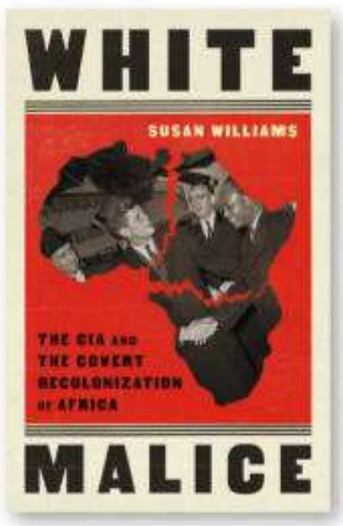
What particularly appeals to you about this time and place?
The landscape of 19th-century history is fascinating. It was a time of great discovery and enlightenment, but also of huge inequality and injustice. It was the first era in which three "ordinary" women could break boundaries to write revolutionary fiction that still inspires us today. And I'll never get bored of exploring those dark corners and forbidding moors.

The Red Monarch
by Bella Ellis
Hodder & Stoughton, 352 pages, £14.99

AFRICA

Continental divide

MARTIN MEREDITH considers a book that chronicles the stories of African nations on the cusp of independence – and the role of foreign actors in determining their futures



White Malice: The CIA and the Neocolonisation of Africa
by Susan Williams
C Hurst & Co, 688 pages, £25

International intervention King Baudouin of Belgium takes part in independence celebrations in Congo, 1960. A new study of the nation's postcolonial experiences explores the central role played by the CIA

As African states gained independence from colonial rule during the 1950s and 1960s, the world's rival power blocs jostled to secure influence and control. While the Cold War reached a peak elsewhere, it also spread into African arenas. With its vast mineral resources, the continent was considered too valuable a prize to lose, and the position that each newly independent government adopted towards the west or the Soviet bloc was seen as key. Intelligence agencies on all sides were hard at work, bribing and plotting.

Susan Williams' main focus is on the chaos that erupted in Congo after its independence from Belgian rule in June 1960, and the fate of its first leader, Patrice Lumumba, ousted in a western-backed military coup after only 77 days in office. His execution by a firing squad in January 1961 made him one of the most famous political martyrs of modern times.

Williams provides a wealth of detail about the network of agents, informants, collaborators, front companies, cultural organisations, publications and money that the CIA used to further its objectives in Congo and elsewhere. But, to my mind, she fails to produce a convincing narrative of complex events in which many other players were involved.

The difficulties Lumumba faced at independence were immense. No Congolese person had any experience of government or parliamentary life beyond the local level. There were no Congolese doctors, secondary school teachers or army officers. Fearing the possibility of an insurrection, Belgium had decided to grant independence in a matter of months, calculating that it would continue to run the country much as before. But elections left Congo fragmented by rival factions; Lumumba's party won only a quarter of parliamentary seats, and the coalition he managed to patch together included prominent opponents.

> **"Patrice Lumumba's execution by a firing squad in January 1961 made him one of the most famous political martyrs of modern times"**

Within a few days, unrest erupted and an army mutiny spread across the country. Lumumba accused Belgian officers of fomenting rebellion, and removed the entire officer corps. Internal security collapsed and an exodus of white expatriates left Congo bereft of expertise. Belgian troops intervened, infuriating Lumumba. The state began to disintegrate. With the connivance of Belgium and the support of its mining and commercial firms, Katanga – the country's richest province, with giant copper and uranium mines – declared its own independence. The diamond province of South Kasai followed.

In a bid to restore order, the United Nations organised a major airlift of foreign troops, mainly from African nations, and installing a civilian task force. But in an increasingly volatile mood, Lumumba demanded that UN forces be used to end Katanga's secession. When the UN refused, he turned to the Soviet Union and, with its support, dispatched a military expedition to crush secession in Kasai and then in Katanga. The resulting massacres were described by UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld as having "the characteristics of genocide".

Schemes to remove Lumumba were soon launched. President Eisenhower authorised the CIA to "eliminate" him, but a poisoning plot failed. With the encouragement of the CIA and the connivance of UN officials, Joseph Mobutu, Lumumba's army chief of staff and former friend, deposed him. Lumumba knew his life was in grave danger. "If I die, *tant pis* [too bad]," he told a friend. "The Congo needs martyrs." H

Martin Meredith is the author of books including *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence* (Simon & Schuster, 2011)

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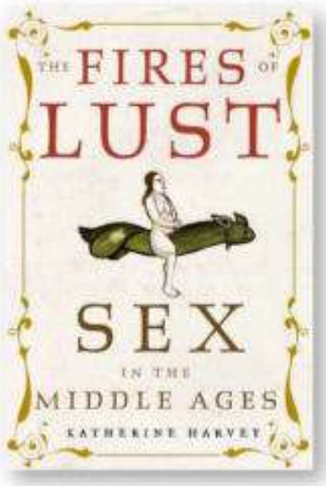
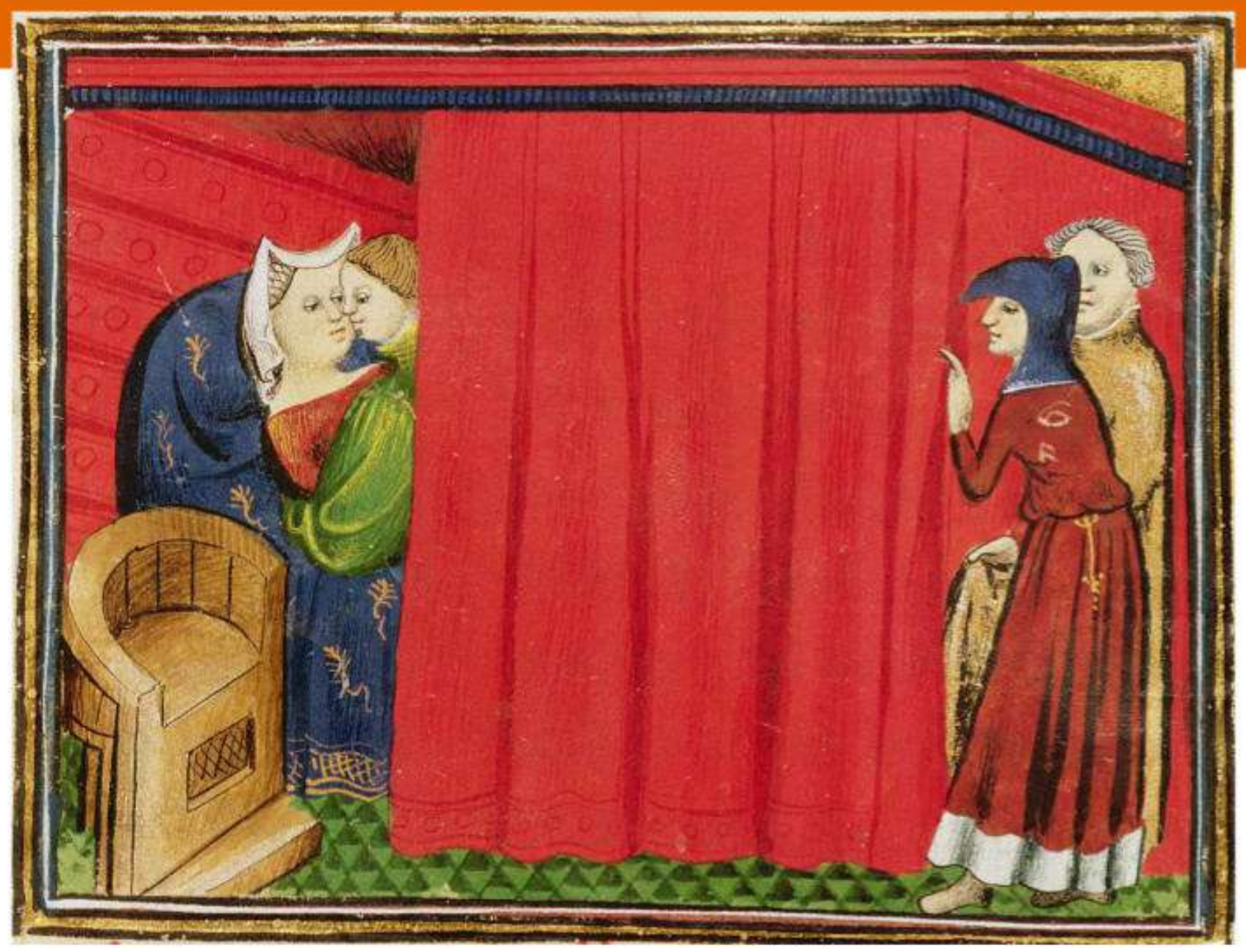
MEDIEVAL

An intimate history



The Fires of Lust: Sex in the Middle Ages
by Katherine Harvey
Reaktion Books, 296 pages, £20



Prying eyes A couple lie in bed, oblivious to onlookers, in this illustration. Katherine Harvey's new book "offers insights into the realities of medieval sex from multiple angles"

For a book about the medieval era, *The Fires of Lust* is surprisingly timely. In September 2021, the US state of Texas signed a bill into law that severely restricts abortion. Some commentators have lambasted the legislation, which bans abortion at around six weeks, as "medieval". Yet, as Katherine Harvey demonstrates in her meticulously researched book, such legislation is a very modern phenomenon.

The medieval church was actually rather lenient about terminations performed before what was termed the "quickening" – foetal movement that becomes detectable at between 15 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. Well-meaning critique of so-called "medieval" legislation belongs, in Harvey's words, to "a long tradition of associating the Middle Ages with all the vices… that we like to think we have subsequently become too good for".

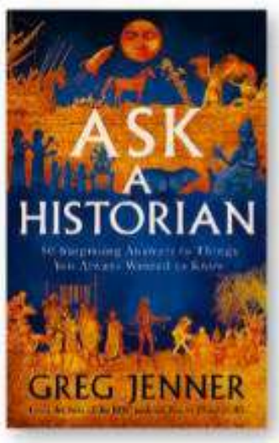
The Fires of Lust challenges this "tradition" head on, providing an expansive, accessible and highly engaging account of what we do – and don't – know about western European sexual culture in the Middle Ages. The book offers multiple insights into the realities of medieval sex: from having the "right kind" of sex – reproductive intercourse between Christian spouses in approved positions – to the "right kind" of not having sex, including clerical celibacy and much-prized female virginity.

After establishing the sociocultural norms in play, Harvey traces with nuance the sexual practices and sexual subjects deemed undesirable, immoral and even outright unacceptable. We learn, for instance, about the ambiguous role of sex work in medieval society, the hostility experienced by people in interfaith and interracial unions, the violent marginalisation of men who pursued sexual encounters with other men, and much else besides. In its impressive breadth, *The Fires of Lust* necessarily sacrifices depth. It's unsurprising that the reader is often left wanting more – rather fittingly, perhaps, for a book that lets us peek through the keyhole of the medieval bedroom. H

Alicia Spencer-Hall, honorary senior research fellow at Queen Mary University of London and co-editor, with Blake Gutt, of *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography* (Amsterdam University Press, 2021)

GENERAL

Any questions?



Ask a Historian
by Greg Jenner
W&N, 352 pages, £16.99

This rewarding romp through the highways and byways of the past comes from the pen of a master communicator of public history: Greg Jenner, host of BBC podcasts *You're Dead to Me* and *Homeschool History*.

The concept is imaginative: to answer some of the burning questions you've always had about history, but didn't know who to ask. Organised thematically, the book responds to 50 questions submitted by members of the public on topics ranging from the quirky to the serious, the intriguing to the historiographical, and even, occasionally, the irreverent. They include "Who gives historical periods their names?", "What conditions did members of the Windrush generation meet when they arrived in the UK?" and "What did *The Flintstones* get right about the Stone Age?" Each question is unpacked in its own dedicated chapter in a clear and comprehensive way – a process that also often serves to illuminate the histories of seemingly unrelated subjects, such as high heels, curry and the reasons why the devil is so frequently depicted as a goat.

This is an immensely enjoyable book, written in a lively, engaging style accessible to a broad audience of all ages. Jenner's chatty prose makes it feel as if you're having a conversation directly with the fascinating, knowledgeable and hugely likeable host, guiding you down wormholes into the past. As you'd expect from the self-proclaimed "chief nerd" from the BBC's tremendous *Horrible Histories* series, the book is both very funny and underpinned by a core of rigorous research.

One of Jenner's real achievements in this book, as in his other projects, is the creation of a genre of public history that fuses scholarly research with humour, and is intended to entertain as much as it is to educate. For this he is to be congratulated. H

James Daybell, professor of early modern British history at the University of Plymouth and co-author, with Sam Willis, of the *Histories of the Unexpected* series (Atlantic)

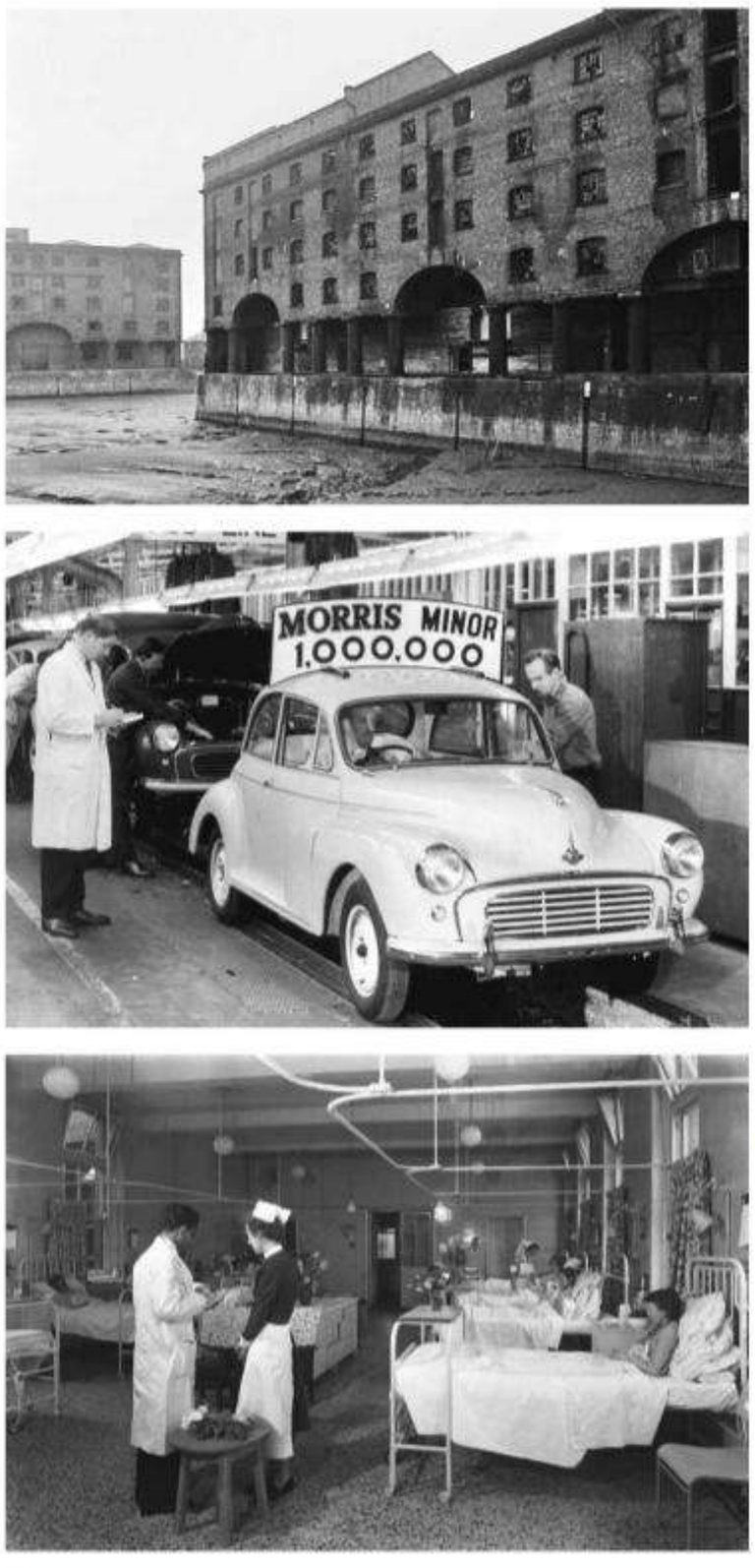
BRIDGEMAN

THE GREAT DEBATE 2022

Historical Association
The voice for history

The 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II has seen global and widespread changes, including in societal infrastructure, industry, rural life, the environment and ideas. Which changes of the last 70 years have affected your local area the most?

Join the Great Debate, the public speaking competition for students in Years 10–13, and put your argument to the judges in no more than five minutes!



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To celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Historical Association patron Her Majesty the Queen, the Historical Association are dedicating our annual public speaking competition to a review of her long reign. Students should research, contemplate and prepare a talk about how the world has changed through events or alterations in their local area. They can choose to look at the whole period or just an aspect of it.

Students may want to consider topics around: different types of employment; the houses or accommodation in which people live; the technology in people's lives; the different types of communities that are in their area; food and eating choices; leisure activities; and what they think is important about the area in which they live.

- The Great Debate is a public speaking competition for students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13.
- Heats are running across the UK from November 2021 through January 2022, and the winner of each heat will go forward to the final.
- The final will be held at Windsor Castle on 26 March 2022.

To find out more visit:
www.history.org.uk/go/greatdebate

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WORDS BY **MATT ELTON**

THE BOOKSHELF

EUROPE

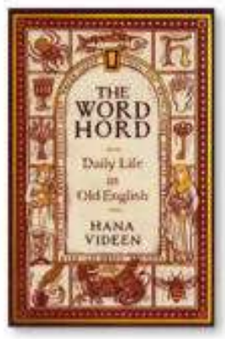
The Burgundians: A Vanished Empire
by Bart Van Loo
(Head of Zeus, 624 pages, £30)

European superstate

By the end of the 15th century, Burgundy had reached its day of reckoning, undone by poor military and marital decisions and dynastic wrangling. Yet for over 1,000 years, the kingdom – then duchy – had dominated Europe, influencing its politics and philosophy, trade and traditions. This suitably epic account of Burgundy's rise and fall has proved a huge success since it was first published in Belgium in 2019.

LANGUAGE

The Wordhord: Daily Life in Old English
by Hana Videen
(Profile, 304 pages, £12.99)



Root words

All of the surviving texts written in Old English, the language brought to Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers in the fifth century, total just over 3 million words. These combine the familiar, or at least translatable (*winter, spring, sumer, hærfest*) mixed with the alien (*mann-drēam*, joy; *earfoþ-hwīl*, hardship). This lively linguistic history explores their origins and the world in which they were used.

SOCIAL

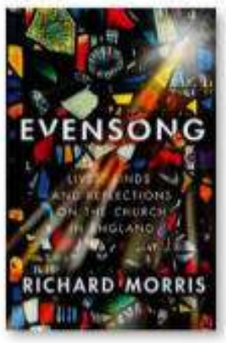
Fabric: The Hidden History of the Material World
by Victoria Finlay
(Profile, 528 pages, £25)

Material wealth

This look at the role of cloth throughout history opens on a surprising note: with twin meditations on Russia's 1917 October Revolution and the recent deaths of the author's parents. This exemplifies both the breadth and the seriousness of what some might dismiss as flimsy, lightweight fare, as Victoria Finlay charts how materials including cotton and wool have served practical, cultural and symbolic purposes.

RELIGION

Evensong: Lives, Finds and Reflections on the Church in England
by Richard Morris
(W&N, 336 pages, £25)

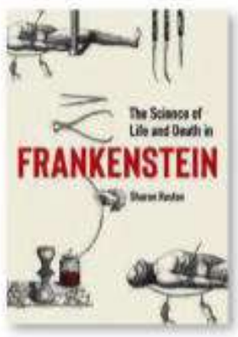


Faith and fellowship

It can sometimes be regarded as an institution out of time but, as this intimate, idiosyncratic account notes, the Church of England continues to influence public life and private morality well into the 21st century. Centred around a series of reminiscences of the author's relationship with the church's practices, places and people, the book also has much to say about issues of community and identity.

SCIENCE

The Science of Life and Death in Frankenstein
by Sharon Ruston
(Bodleian Library, 240 pages, £25)

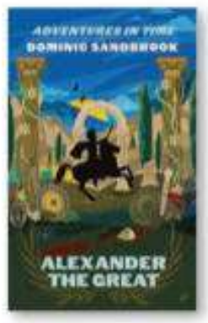


Creature feature

Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein* was famously born from a writing contest between authors on a stormy Swiss holiday. But it also drew on ideas and innovations of the age, including revelations about electricity and oxygen, and new techniques for reviving people on the brink of death. Sharon Ruston charts the fascination and unease they provoked, and the reasons they still enthral us today.

CHILDREN

Adventures in Time: Alexander the Great
by Dominic Sandbrook
(Particular Books, 336 pages, £14.99)

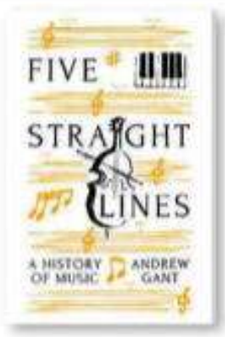


Ancient hero, new adventures

If our feature on Alexander the Great (page 18) has sparked your interest in the ancient king, this vibrant biography would make a great follow-up. Although it's aimed at children not much younger than the "Macedonian boy" when he fought in his first military campaigns, the exciting, evocative style of broadcaster and *BBC History Magazine* contributor Dominic Sandbrook will appeal to readers of all ages.

CULTURAL

Five Straight Lines: A History of Music
by Andrew Gant
(Profile, 656 pages, £30)

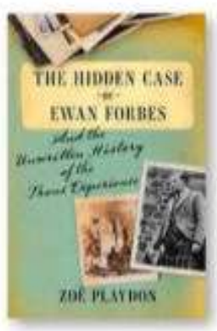


Notes from the past

From ancient melodies conjured using lyre and pipe to the vast array of songs now available at the mere touch of a screen, this fascinating book chronicles the ways in which music has provided the soundtrack to centuries of history. It's a vast subject, but composer and writer Andrew Gant is a masterful guide, introducing readers to the major players and key themes of an entrancing topic.

20TH CENTURY

The Hidden Case of Ewan Forbes
by Zoë Playdon
(Bloomsbury, 416 pages, £20)



The personal and the political

Born in 1912 to a wealthy Scottish family, Ewan Forbes was assigned female at birth before transitioning and living as a man. In 1965, though, a cousin contested his inheritance on the basis of gender – leading to a court case shrouded in secrecy. This book tells that remarkable story and explores what it reveals about views of identity and the experiences of transgender people in the 20th century.

VISIT

Master painter

From the depraved squalor depicted in *Gin Lane* to the wickedly satirical *Marriage A-la Mode*, a set of prints espousing the dangers of arranged marriages among the upper class, William Hogarth's artworks shocked – and enthralled – 18th-century England.

But his works weren't produced in a creative vacuum. For the first time, Tate Britain are displaying more than 60 of Hogarth's masterpieces alongside 18th-century European works. The exhibition considers how societal shifts impacted art at the time, in Hogarth's native Britain and on the continent.

For instance, the pleasures of 18th-century Europe as well as its stark inequalities were brought to life by Hogarth and a slew of European artists, who invented a new way of painting modern life. Hogarth's 1734 *A Rake's Progress* – showing the rise and fall of a young man consumed by vice – is displayed alongside Italian artist Guiseppe Crespi's *The Flea* (1707–09), another example of urban storytelling.

Hogarth and Europe
Tate Britain, London / Opens 3 November / Booking required / *tate.org.uk*

TATE

ENCOUNTERS

DIARY: VISIT / WATCH / LISTEN / TASTE
By **Jonathan Wright, Samantha Nott** and **Rhiannon Davies**
90 EXPLORE... Imperial War Museum London

Unhappily ever after
The second print of Hogarth's *Marriage A-la Mode* series, c1743, shows a young husband (with a syphilis spot on his neck) and his wife. She may have a lover, who knocked over the red chair as he fled

WATCH

Imperial ghosts

Sathnam Sanghera (pictured) explores how Britain's age of empire is perceived today

We live in a time when the question of how we should look back at the British empire is, to say the very least, contested. Here was an empire that, in 1913, held sway over more than 410 million people, close to a quarter of the world's population. And here is a history that, as writer Sathnam Sanghera explored in his book *Empireland: How Imperialism has Shaped Modern Britain*, still helps to shape our culture and politics.

It's an idea Sanghera picks up again for a two-part documentary that sees him travelling across Britain and meeting people from a variety of walks of life. How do they view Britain's age of empire?

There's a personal element, too. Sanghera's family arrived in the UK in 1968, a time of overt racism. An MP for his home town was Enoch Powell, who that year gave his "Rivers of Blood" speech.

A key question underpins the series: might Britons be able to look back at the most troubling aspects of the country's imperial past, see them clearly, and truly come to terms with this history?

Empire State of Mind
Channel 4 / Saturday 13 November

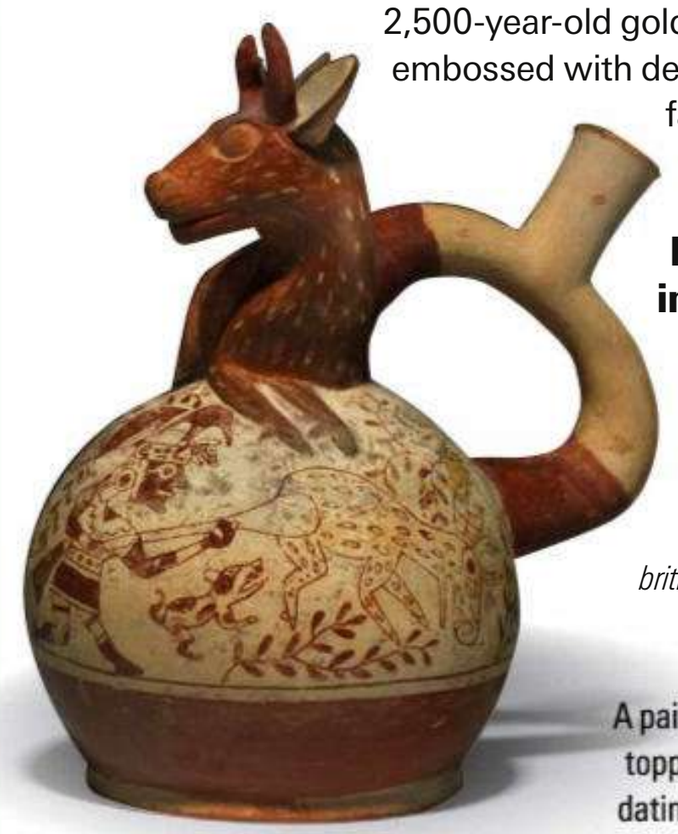
VISIT

Ancient cultures

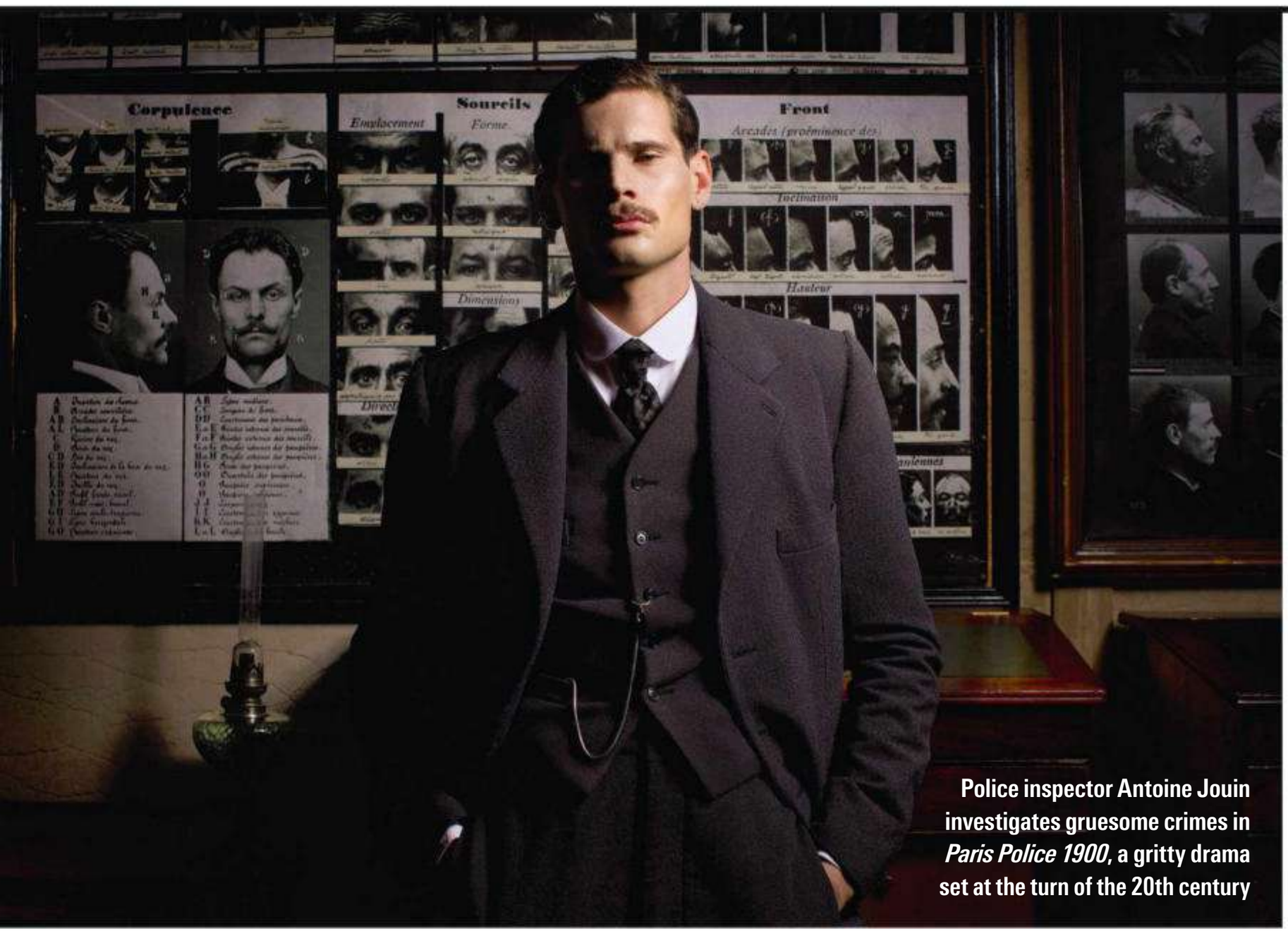
With its majestic mountain ranges and lush tropical jungle, Peru has been home to various vibrant civilisations over the millennia, from the Chavín, a society famed for their intricate temples and who first flourished in the region in around 1200 BC, to the Incas, whose culture thrived until the 16th century.

These South American societies, and four more, are the focus of a new British Museum exhibition. As part of the display, more than 40 objects have been brought to the UK from Peru for the first time, including a stunning 2,500-year-old gold headdress embossed with designs of human faces with feline fangs.

Peru: A Journey in Time
British Museum, London / 11 November–20 February 2022 / Booking advised / *britishmuseum.org*



A painted Peruvian vessel topped with a deer head, dating from AD 100–800, is part of the display



Police inspector Antoine Jouin investigates gruesome crimes in *Paris Police 1900*, a gritty drama set at the turn of the 20th century

WATCH

Paris noir

It wasn't all La Belle Époque frivolity in Paris at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. As an expensive new French drama reminds us, this was also a time of overt anti-Semitism and of the Dreyfus Affair, a tumultuous time politically.

Beginning with the demise of Félix Faure, president of the French Republic, shown as dying while spending some quality time with his mistress, *Paris Police 1900* offers a gritty, even cynical take on the era. Driving the plot is the discovery of a woman's torso, found in a suitcase floating in the Seine. Inspector Antoine Jouin (Jérémie Laheurte) volunteers to investigate, only to find still greater horrors.

Paris Police 1900
BBC iPlayer / Streaming now

CHANNEL 4/BRITISH MUSEUM/BBC

A female worker at Tredegar in the late 19th century. Many women found employment in the Welsh coal industry

VISIT

Back-breaking work

Although coal mining is typically seen as a male trade, women worked in the Welsh collieries for centuries. In fact, in early mining, whole families were often involved, with husbands, wives and their children all finding employment in the industry, be it toiling away down in the pit or sorting materials up above.

Although women typically accounted for a small proportion of the mining workforce, and some collieries had a male-only policy, women still played a significant role, often taking on the jobs that the men found demeaning.

Now Big Pit National Coal Museum is shining a light on these forgotten female mine workers in a groundbreaking new display. The exhibition delves into how women worked in the pits – both underground and on the surface – and examines the key roles they later took on in the offices and medical centres.

Tip Girls

Big Pit National Coal Museum, Torfaen, Wales / Until 1 September 2022 / Free entry / Booking required / *museum.wales/bigpit*

BIG PIT NATIONAL COAL MUSEUM/THE JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE

WEEKLY TV & RADIO
Visit **historyextra.com** for weekly updates on upcoming television and radio programmes

HISTORY ON THE AIRWAVES

"Jane Goodall didn't see chimpanzees as numbered experiments – she individualised the animal world"

Playwright **SARAH WOODS** (left) tells us about her new radio drama that charts ethologist Dr Jane Goodall's early years in Africa, where her pioneering work revolutionised the way researchers viewed the animal kingdom

Can you tell us a little about your new drama, *In the Shadow of Man*?
It's a dramatisation of Jane Goodall's 1971 book, which documents the first 10 years she spent studying chimpanzees in Gombe, Tanzania. It starts in 1960, but it's also interwoven with a present-day interview I conducted with Jane, which brings the story up to date in the sense that we're looking at it through the lens of now.

Was a woman going to Africa an unusual thing to do in the sixties?
From the age of 10, she had this dream of going to Africa and working with animals – and an opportunity arose. But for a young woman at that time, it was a really unusual thing to do. Women perhaps went out and worked as missionaries, but they didn't go out and study in the way she did.

What was Jane's approach to her work?
Her approach was very much what she learned as a child living in Bournemouth, spending time with birds in the garden and encouraging the birds to trust her just through patience, curiosity and determination. In 1960 she hadn't been to university or college – she took out what she'd learned herself throughout her life and applied that in the field.

In her first six months, Jane made two important discoveries. One is that chimpanzees use tools, which turned the idea that only humans use tools on its head. She discovered that chimpanzees eat meat, too. She also pioneered an approach that saw animals as having characters. She gave the chimpanzees names. Rather than seeing them merely as numbered creatures, Jane very much individualised the animal world in her research.

Later, as a campaigner [Goodall, DBE, founded the Jane Goodall Institute and she is a UN Messenger of Peace] moved out of the forest because she realised that if she didn't do something, chimpanzees were not necessarily going to survive at all.

Is she a historically significant figure?
Yes, she is. And that's a lot to do with not coming from a place of received knowledge. We've been very good, particularly over the past 50 years, at specialising more and more and, in doing so, perhaps becoming less connected with a broader picture of the world. What Jane has done is start from what she instinctively felt was important in the world and pursued that instinct – and that's unusual.

She says in the programme: "I think a lot of what's wrong today is due to ignorance, due to us becoming separated from the natural world to a large extent. When you understand nature, then you've come to love it. And when you love it, then you want to care for it." That encapsulates the journey we hope listeners will make. H

In the Shadow of Man will air on BBC Radio 4 on Sunday 7 November. You can find out more about Jane's work at *janegoodall.org.uk*

A photo of David Greybeard who was the first chimpanzee that Jane Goodall observed using tools and eating meat

Featuring Vermouth, this baked seafood treat is a luxury

TASTE

Oysters Rockefeller

Created in 1889 at Antoine's, a famous family-run eatery in New Orleans, this decadent dish was supposedly named after millionaire John D Rockefeller.

INGREDIENTS

75g unsalted butter, divided
1 small shallot, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
60g fresh spinach, chopped
2 tbsp Vermouth
25g grated Parmesan
2 slices cooked and finely chopped bacon (optional)
50g Panko breadcrumbs
24 raw oysters, shucked (we used 12 large oysters, which also works)
4 lemon wedges

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Heat a frying pan over medium heat. Add 55g of the butter and, when its melted, add the shallot. Sauté for 3–4 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the garlic and sauté for one more minute, continuing to stir frequently. Then add the chopped spinach and Vermouth and cook until the spinach is wilted, which should take about 2 minutes.

Stir in the Parmesan cheese (and bacon, if using). Melt the remaining butter and mix it with the breadcrumbs. Place the oysters in their half shell on a baking sheet. Top the oysters with the spinach mixture, then sprinkle the breadcrumbs on the top.

Bake for about 8–10 minutes, or until the breadcrumbs are golden brown and the filling is hot. Serve immediately, with the lemon wedges on the side.

Recipe adapted from The Wicked Noodle: thewickednoodle.com

WATCH

Scenes from a doomed marriage

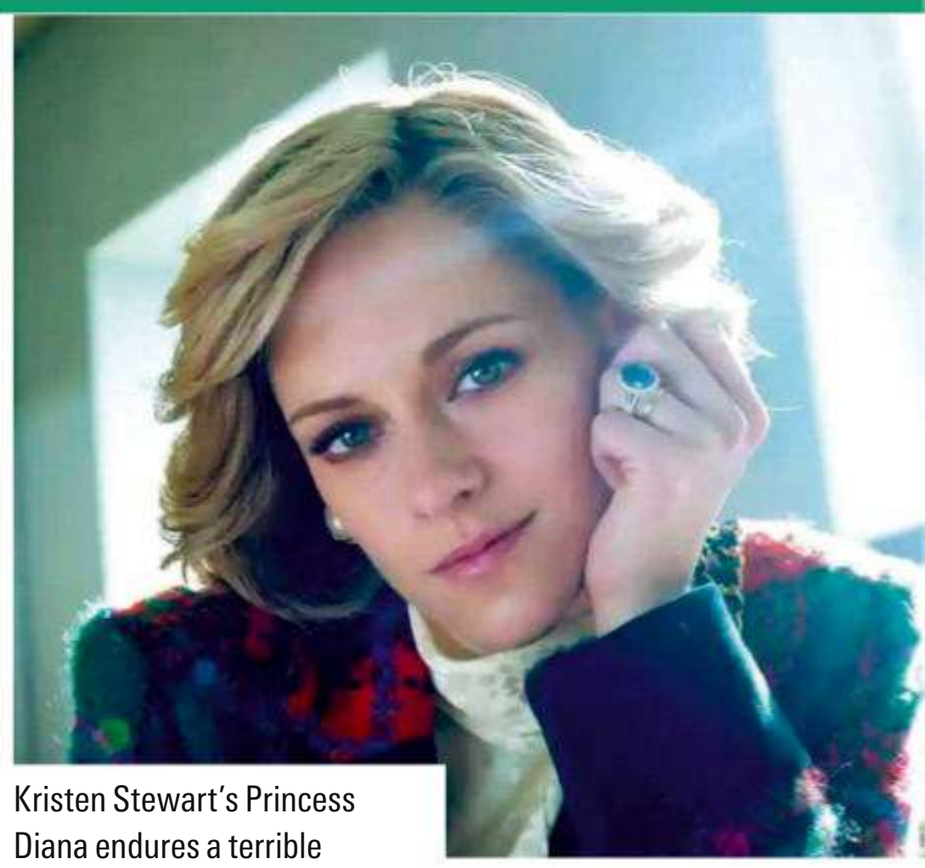
Sandringham, December 1991. The relationship between Diana and Charles Windsor is deeply troubled, but the Princess of Wales is still expected to attend Christmas festivities with the royal family. What follows, as imagined by scriptwriter Steven Knight (*Peaky Blinders*) and Chilean director Pablo Larraín, is far from festive.

As with Larraín's *Jackie*, which focused on the life of Jacqueline Kennedy in the wake of her husband's assassination, *Spencer* is a drama that deals with a woman trapped in the spotlight. But where *Jackie* at least holds out hope of Kennedy being able to move on, Diana is shown as someone hemmed in wherever she turns. Perhaps worse, she's also constantly watched and judged, not least by domineering equerry Major Gregory (Timothy Spall).

You could of course argue this is all just a fairy tale, but that's precisely the point, as we're offered a Gothic-tinged and chilly counterpoint to the frothy spectacle of Charles and Diana's sunlit wedding day. At the centre of the drama, Kristen Stewart captures not just Diana's mannerisms, but the princess's brittle quality.

Spencer

In cinemas from Friday 5 November



Kristen Stewart's Princess Diana endures a terrible Christmas at Sandringham, in the upcoming biopic *Spencer*

VISIT

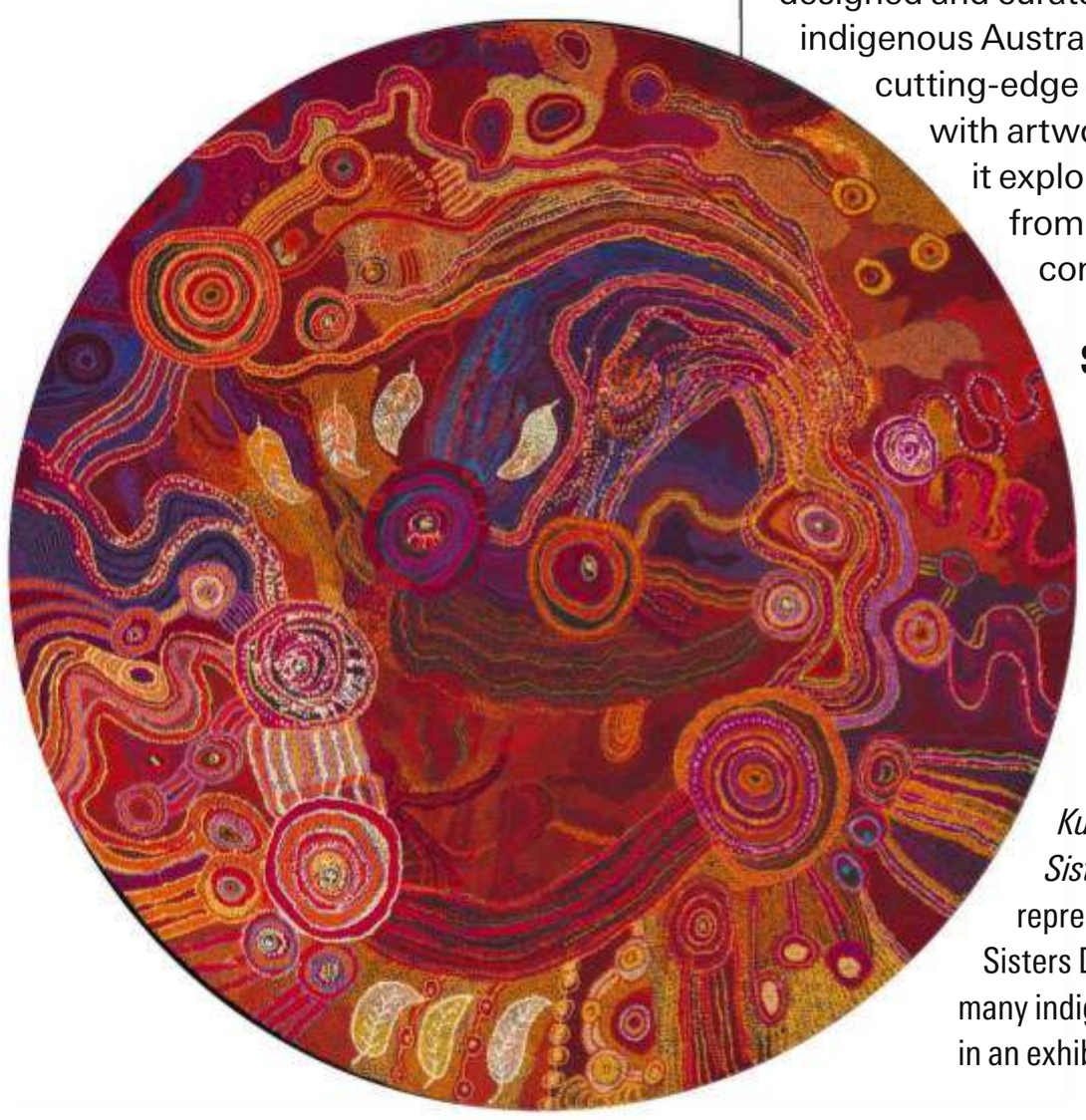
Creation stories

For centuries indigenous Australians have shared the Seven Sisters Dreaming stories – ancient creation myths of Australia. In these tales, seven ancestral beings, known as the sisters, are being chased by the lecherous shape-shifter Wati Nyiru or Yurla, who takes on various forms to try to trick the sisters. Their encounters are etched into the country's landscape and mirrored in the stars, as the Orion constellation pursues the Pleiades star cluster through the night sky.

The Box is hosting an exhibition on these stories that was originally staged in Australia, and which has been wholly designed and curated by a team of indigenous Australians. Combining cutting-edge exhibition technologies with artworks, songs and dances, it explores fascinating sagas from the world's oldest continuing culture.

Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters

The Box, Plymouth / Until 27 February 2022 / Booking required / *theboxplymouth.com*



Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters, created in 2015. This representation of the Seven Sisters Dreaming stories is one of many indigenous artworks included in an exhibition at The Box

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA/ALAMY/SAMANTHA NOTT

Police arrest a protester at the battle of Cable Street on 4 October 1936 – the focus of a new radio drama

LISTEN

Blood on the streets

In 1936, the influence of Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists (BUF) was on the wane. Party membership was declining, in part because of disquiet at the party's increasingly anti-Semitic stance. Yet Mosley could still get boots on the ground at protests, as a BUF march into London's East End, which had a large Jewish population, proved.

Writer Martin McNamara's drama looks back at what came to be known as the battle of Cable Street, when anti-fascist protesters attempted to stop the BUF marchers, who were guarded by a police escort. It's a flashpoint McNamara describes through the experiences of two brothers.

Mosley Must Fall
BBC Radio 4 / Monday 15 November

WATCH

Triumph against the odds

The life of Margaret Beaufort (pictured below) almost defies belief. She became a widow in her young teens – her husband, Edmund Tudor, was a victim of plague, contracted when he was imprisoned in Carmarthen Castle – and a mother. Her only child would grow up to defeat Richard III at the battle of Bosworth Field (1485) and, despite having an at best contested claim to the throne, be crowned Henry VII, the first Tudor monarch.

A new series charts Beaufort's story in docudrama style and eschews boring boys to offer a refreshingly female-centric take on the latter years of the Wars of the Roses.

Royal Bastards: Rise of the Tudors
Sky History / Monday 22 November

WATCH

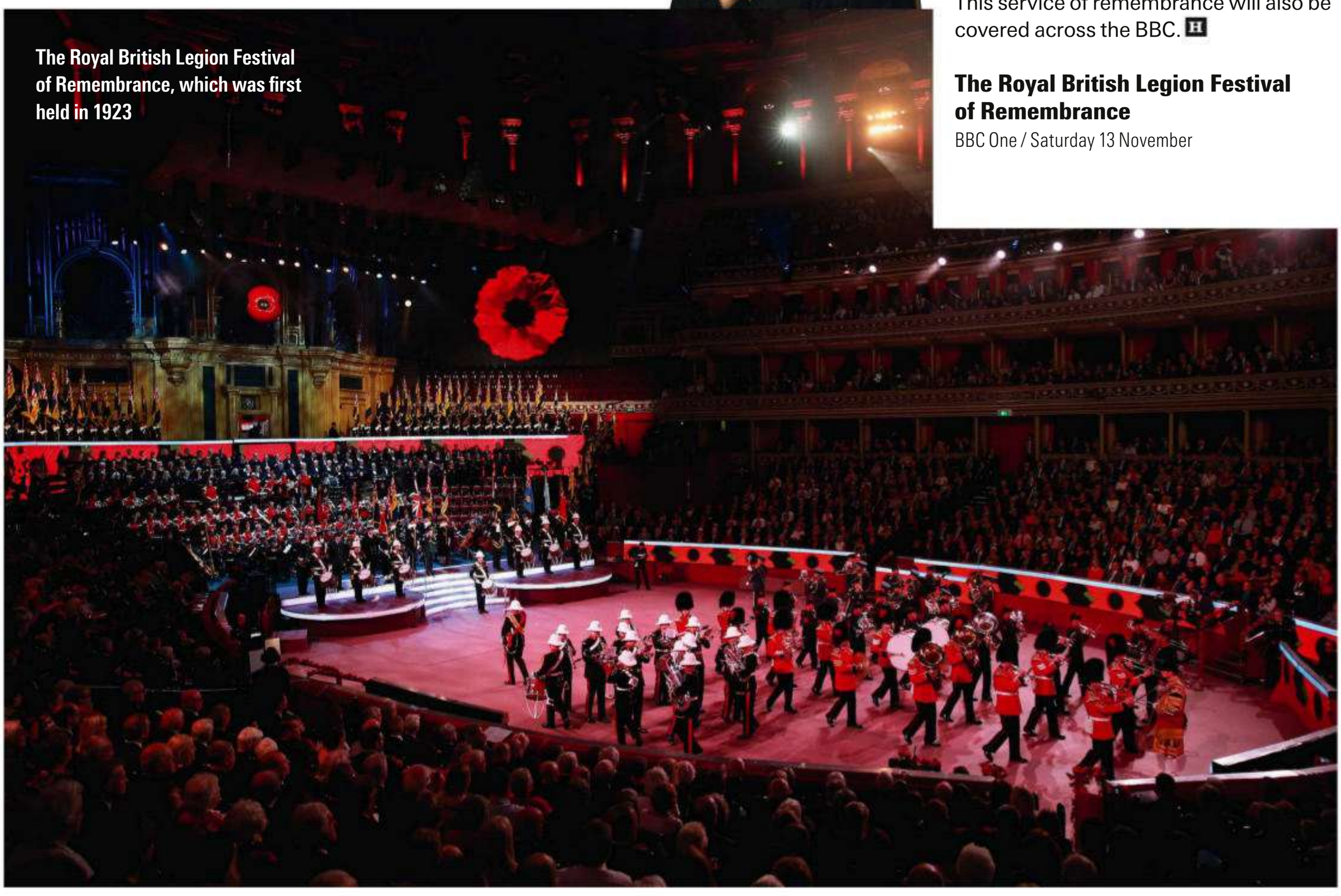
Never forgotten

A century ago, in 1921, the Royal British Legion first began selling poppies to raise funds for former servicemen. This was an era when, with the horror of mechanised warfare on the western front still vivid, many of the now familiar rituals around marking Remembrance Sunday were in the process of being invented.

This is certainly true of the Festival of Remembrance, which was first held on 11 November 1923 when John Foulds' composition *A World Requiem: A Cenotaph in Sound* – a memorial to the dead of all nations, performed to an audience that included the Prince of Wales – received its debut. Today, the event remains a centrepiece of the remembrance calender, and this year will feature a potent mix of pageantry, choral works and prayers. Hopefully it will be far less disrupted by Covid-19 than last year.

On Sunday 14 November attention will focus on the Cenotaph in Whitehall, and the annual National Service of Remembrance marking "the contribution of British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women in the two world wars and later conflicts". This service of remembrance will also be covered across the BBC. H

The Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance
BBC One / Saturday 13 November



The Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance, which was first held in 1923

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

War of the world

Imperial War Museum London has opened new galleries dedicated to two of the most traumatic events in human history – the Second World War and the Holocaust. We sent the historian **KEITH LOWE** along to explore the two exhibitions before they opened to the public

ON THE EH PODCAST

Troubled view
This forest scene and rock-studded beach, displayed in the Holocaust gallery, were the sites of Nazi atrocities. The juxtaposition of seemingly peaceful vistas with human tragedy is, writes Keith Lowe, "deliberately disturbing"

What makes the Imperial War Museum in London different from other, similar institutions around the world? Recently the museum's curators have been given a once-in-a-generation opportunity to answer exactly this question.

In 2014 they unveiled a brand-new atrium, along with a new, permanent First World War gallery. Since then they have designed and built two other new galleries devoted to the Second World War and the Holocaust, which opened to the public on 20 October this year. With their opening, IWM London became probably the only major museum in the world to boast dedicated, permanent exhibitions to all three events under the same roof.

The new galleries are not without their surprises. When visitors first enter the new Second World War exhibition, for example, they will not see a display about Britain and Germany, but one about Italy and Japan. In the 1930s, we are reminded, it was not only the Nazis who expressed a desire for *Lebensraum*: Italy and Japan's imperial expansion was every bit as rapacious.

Pride of place in this room is given to two extraordinary objects, both of them new acquisitions. The first is an antelope hide painted by an Ethiopian artist depicting the Italian invasion of his country in 1935. The second is a child's jacket from Japan, covered in militaristic symbols and images. These objects are symbolic of a new kind of "total" war that was already beginning to involve every aspect of society, and civilians of all kinds – including artists, and even children.

By beginning the exhibition in this way, the museum is sending a clear message to its visitors: this was not merely a British war, nor even a European one, but a vast conflict with origins far from these shores which would eventually engulf the entire globe.

But along the way, the curators also get to highlight another aspect of IWM London that makes it unique. Unlike other museums, this is not only a "national" institution but a self-consciously "imperial" one. It has an obligation to take into account multiple different points of view from around the world, and to place them alongside the accepted British narrative of the war. And rather than shying away from some of the problematic aspects of imperialism, it tackles them head-on.

Stalin and Swastikas

The items on display in the Second World War gallery are impressive in a whole variety of ways. In one room we get to admire Stalin's epaulettes; in another, we see a jigsaw puzzle of Europe entirely made out of Swastika-shaped pieces. Later, we are shown a sick bag issued to one of the men who was tasked with landing on the D-Day beaches. Each of these objects tells a particular story in a way that mere words cannot.

Dotted throughout the rooms are the photographs and stories of around 100 individuals who lived through the war. This is partly an attempt to bring the war more vividly to life, but according to one of the curators, Vikki Hawkins, it is also in response to the changing nature of the sort of visitors who come to the museum.

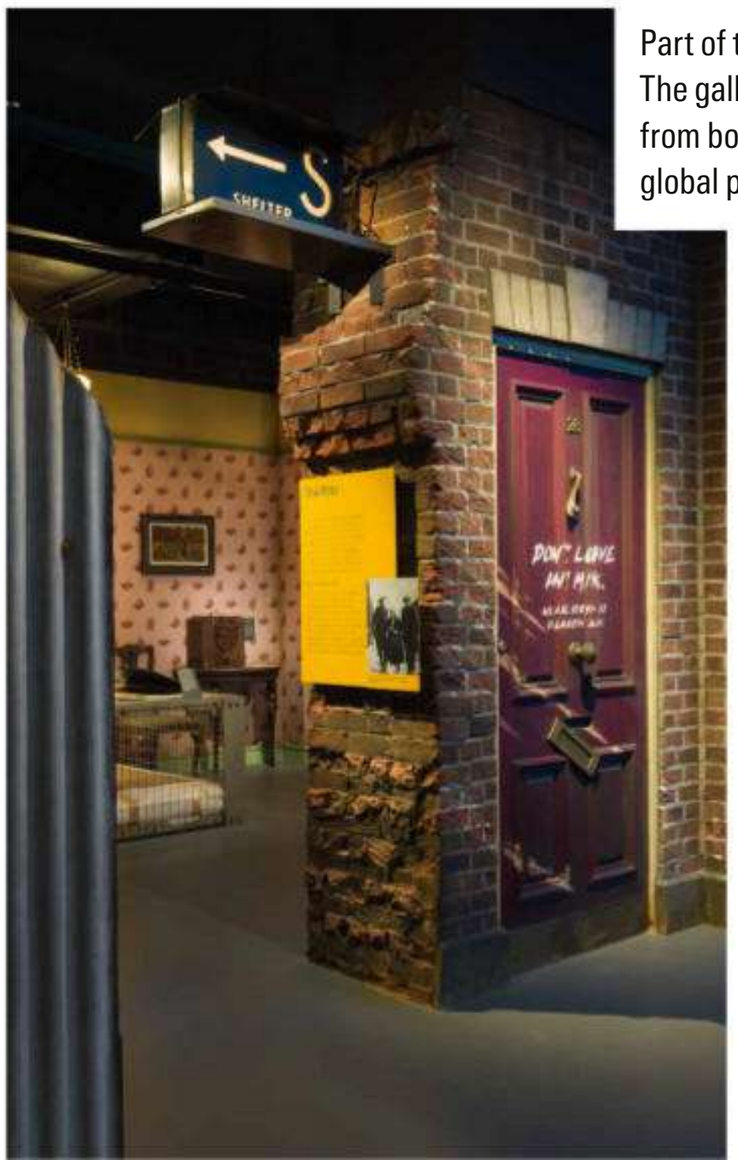
"In the past," she told me, "IWM has relied upon what we affectionately refer to as our 'granddad tour guides' – visitors who lived through the war and who can introduce their own families to objects and stories that were familiar to them. Unfortunately the number of people with living memory of the conflict has significantly reduced in recent years. So we use a range of techniques to bridge that gap, especially through individual stories."

It must be said that these vignettes are often far too short and lacking in detail to pack the same emotional punch that a story from "granddad" might once have had. However, they do give a good cumulative snapshot of the sheer variety of people of all nationalities who were affected by the war.

There are other criticisms one could make. Ever since the 1980s the museum has been moving away from stories about hardware and towards stories about people, and this is just the latest example. Human stories will always be more engaging than mere items of machinery. But there is something undeniably impressive about standing beside a Tiger tank or a Lancaster bomber. IWM London can't compete with its sister institution at Duxford or the tank museum at Bovington, and neither does it try to – there simply isn't enough space here. So be warned: if you are expecting big, impressive displays of machinery, you are bound to be disappointed.

This lack of space manifests itself in other ways, too. One of the disadvantages of including several different exhibitions under one roof is that it is impossible to produce the same level of detail that you can find in, for example, America's National World War II Museum in New Orleans, or the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance

Rather than beginning the Second World War gallery with objects relating to Britain and Germany, IWM has instead chosen a display about Italy and Japan. An antelope hide depicting the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 is a particular highlight



Part of the display on the Blitz. The galleries explore the war from both a British and a global perspective

MORE FROM US

Listen to **Keith Lowe's interview** with three of the exhibitions' curators on our podcast soon at *historyextra.com/podcast*

Against Japanese Aggression in Beijing. Neither is one treated to the vast chambers and monumental war scenes that can be witnessed at the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Moscow.

What IWM's exhibition lacks in grandeur, however, it makes up for in superior historiography. There is no "us" and "them" here, and no judgment of the past with the benefits of hindsight. Nor is there the same naked nationalism that can be found in some other museums around the world. Britain does occupy centre stage at many points in the narrative, but only in appropriate places – during the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, for example. I can think of no other museum in the world – except perhaps the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk – that takes such an impressively global approach to a war that was, after all, a truly global event.

One of the good things about having separate exhibitions about the Second World War and the Holocaust under one roof is that it invites visitors to compare the two events, and explore how they influenced one another.

The Holocaust is mentioned at appropriate points in the Second World War gallery, and vice versa. There is even one double-height room where the two galleries intersect. Hanging between the two spaces is a V1 flying bomb suspended from the ceiling. Visitors to the war gallery down below are told how this bomb terrorised the people of London, while visitors to the Holocaust gallery up above are shown how Jewish slave labour was employed in building the bombs.

Shining through the darkness

If the Second World War gallery is refreshing, the Holocaust gallery is a positive revelation. Most Holocaust museums around the world follow a similar style. As you enter the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, for example, or the museum at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, you are almost immediately plunged into darkness. The atmosphere is uniformly sombre, and one emerges at the end feeling utterly exhausted by all the horror one has witnessed. IWM London has taken a completely different approach, which is both brave and brilliant.

The first few rooms of this exhibition are not dark spaces at all: on the contrary, they are bright, fresh and full of hope. These rooms depict Jewish life before the war, the history of anti-Semitism, and the growth of the various other ideas that also underpinned the Holocaust – imperial expansion, political extremism, eugenics and so on. But as the exhibition is at pains to show, none of this made the Holocaust inevitable. Jewish people at the time had no idea they were going to die, and they had ordinary hopes and anxieties in their daily lives just like anyone else.

One suspects that there are also moral reasons for keeping these rooms bright. The killing that came later, the exhibition seems to say, did not take place in darkness, but in broad daylight. Neither are visitors allowed the luxury of hiding themselves in the darkness as they peruse the displays: we are obliged to approach this subject with our eyes wide open.

There are all kinds of objects and ideas here that will shock visitors, but also help them to see the Holocaust with new eyes. For example, Nazi SD uniforms are displayed alongside Communist Party ones – because in the 1920s and 30s political extremism in Germany swung both ways. Books by Jewish authors that were burned by the Nazis are not displayed on the floor as they are in some Holocaust museums, but on the shelves where they rightly belong.

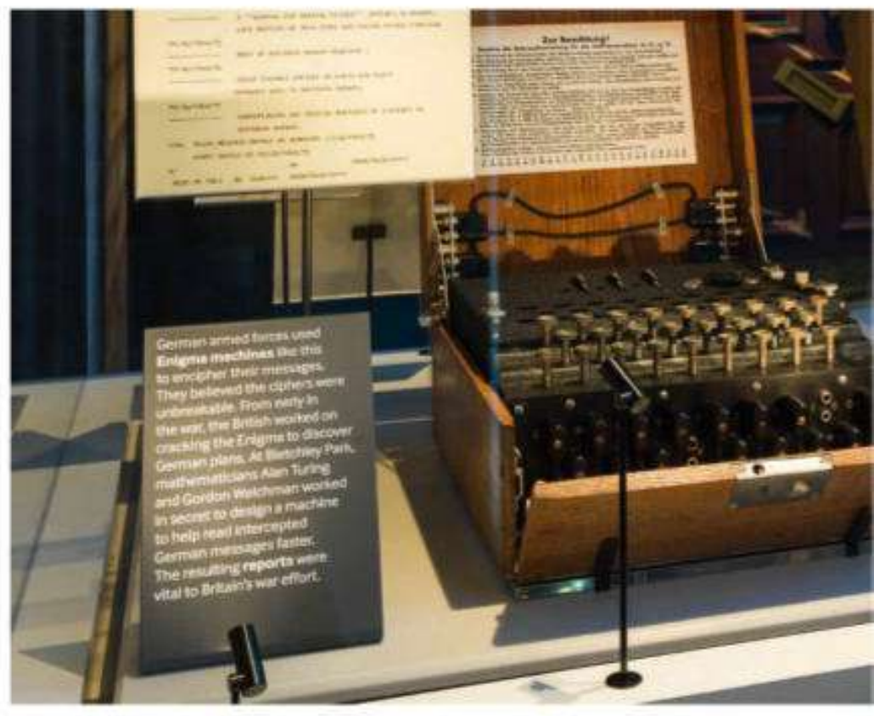
There are some objects that students of the Holocaust might be familiar with, such as a wall tile from the gas chambers at Treblinka, and one of the many shoes stolen from those who were about to be killed. But there are also other objects that might surprise them. In one display case there is an astonishingly anti-Semitic board game called "Juden Raus!" ("Jews Out!"), in which players get to round up Jews for deportation – the first to expel six Jews is the winner.

The attention to detail in this exhibition is really quite impressive. When quotes from Jewish people are displayed on the wall, they are written in a typeface that was designed by a Jewish typographer, Jan van Krimpen. Quotes from Nazis, by contrast, are rendered in a font taken from the typewriter used by Arthur Seyss-Inquart, the notorious Nazi *reichskommissar* (commissioner) of the occupied Netherlands who organised the deportation of Jews from there. Visitors have no way of knowing any of this, but the curators have done it anyway in order to create a subconscious distinction between the words of the perpetrators and those of the victims. Seyss-Inquart's typewriter, incidentally, is also one of the objects on display.

The point of this exhibition is not to stun you into silence, but to make you ask questions. In some of the rooms, huge screens show films of waves lapping on a beach, the branches of a forest swaying gently in the breeze, and other seemingly peaceful scenes. They are not there to soothe you, but quite the opposite: there is something deliberately disturbing about them. These films all depict places where atrocities took place, but they were filmed, in colour, in 2020. The idea is to show that the events of the Holocaust did not happen in some distant, alien place, but in a world we should recognise as our own.

The Holocaust, along with the Second World War, may have ended in 1945, but the dark human impulses that led to both events are eternal. H

"The Holocaust did not happen in some alien place, but in a world we should recognise as our own"


German armed forces used Enigma machines like this to encipher their messages. They believed the ciphers were unbreakable. From early in the war, the British worked on cracking the Enigma to discover German plans. At Bletchley Park, mathematicians Alan Turing and Gordon Welchman worked in secret to design a machine to help read intercepted German messages faster. The resulting reports were vital to Britain's war effort.

Keith Lowe is a Second World War historian and the author of *Prisoners of History: What Monuments to the Second World War Tell Us About Our History and Ourselves* (HarperCollins, 2020)

VISIT Imperial War Museum London's new **Second World War and Holocaust galleries** opened on 20 October. To plan your visit go to **iwm.org.uk**

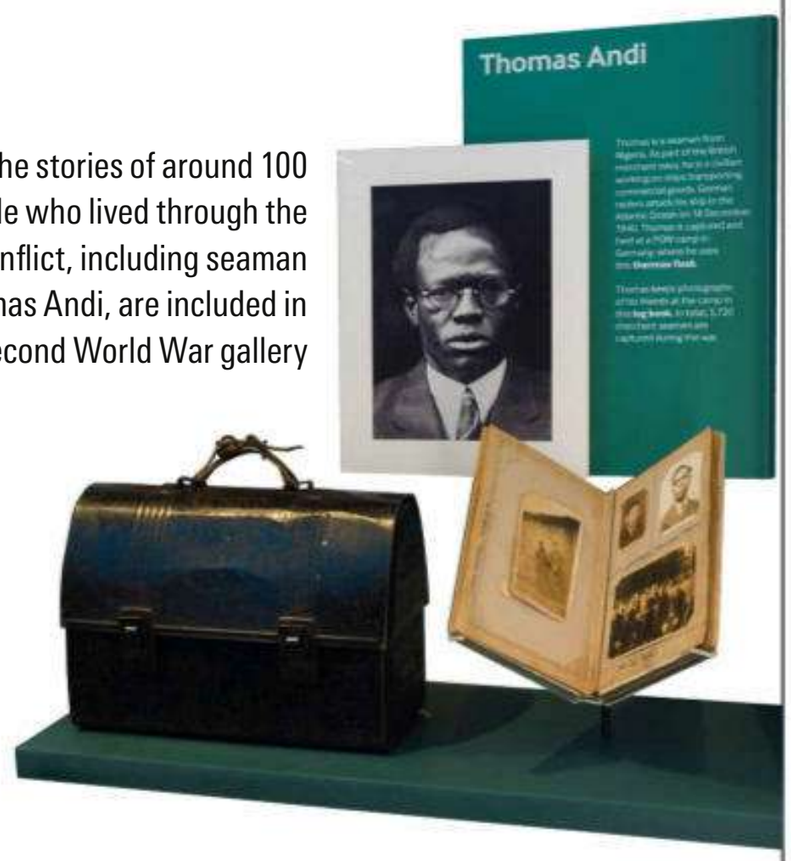
IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

A section of the Second World War gallery. Although some military hardware is included, human stories dominate the new displays

The typewriter used by the notorious Arthur Seyss-Inquart, who rounded up thousands of Jews, is displayed in the exhibition. The font from this machine is used for quotes from Nazis shown in the Holocaust gallery

A display showing the number of ships lost each month in the Battle of the Atlantic between 1940 and 1943

The stories of around 100 people who lived through the conflict, including seaman Thomas Andi, are included in the Second World War gallery



Quotes from Jews, such as the text pictured below, are displayed in a typeface designed by a Jewish typographer, Jan van Krimpen

Part of the Holocaust gallery. Keith Lowe describes IWM London's approach to documenting the genocide as both "brave and brilliant"

PRIZE CROSSWORD

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Storyland
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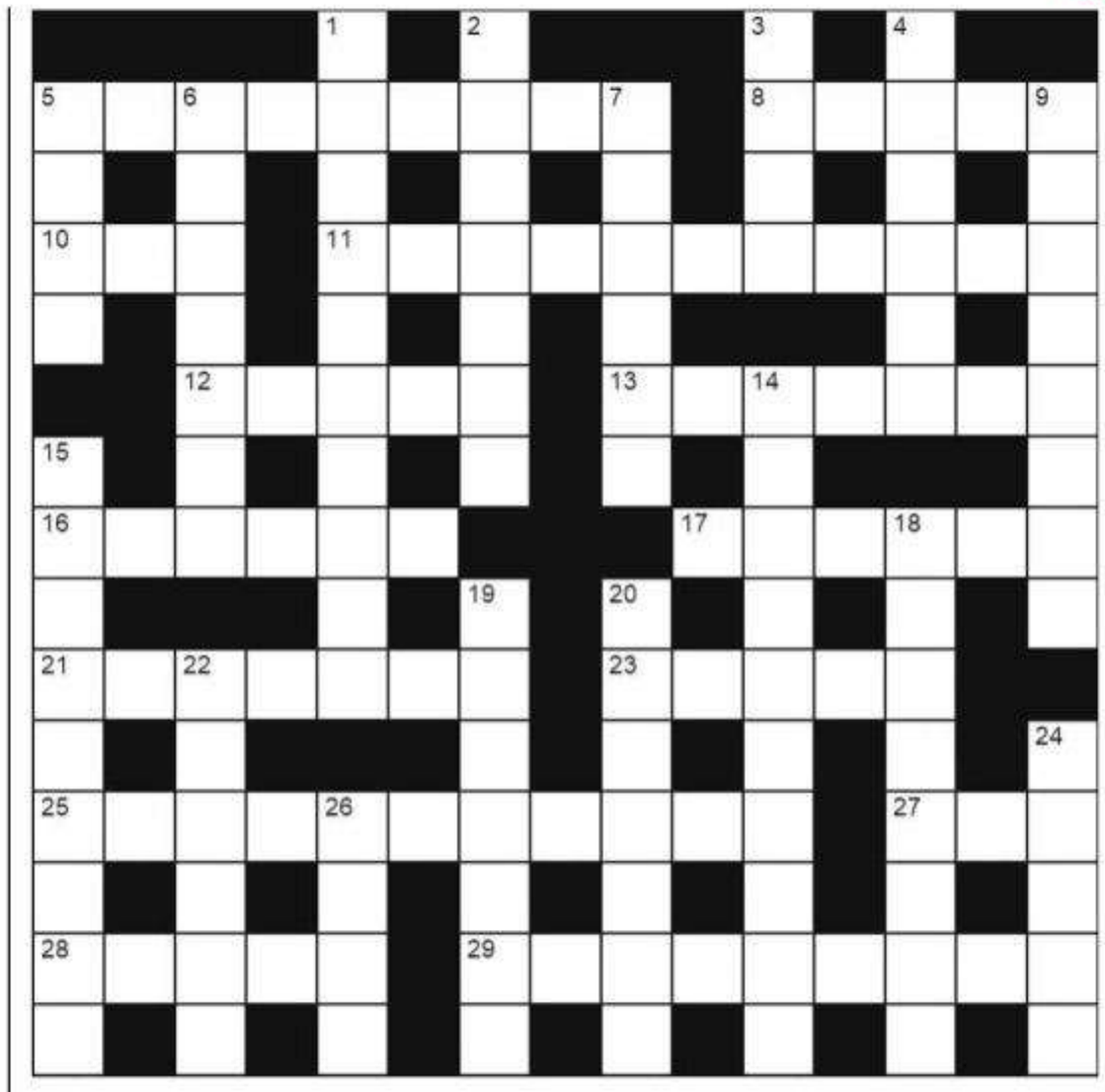
By Amy Jeffs

Breathing new life into the folk tales of Britain, this imaginative new book by Amy Jeffs is rooted in the oldest legends and wildest landscapes. Illustrated with Jeffs' original linocuts, *Storyland* leads readers on a journey across Britain in the footsteps of Lear and Cordelia, Arthur, Merlin and more.



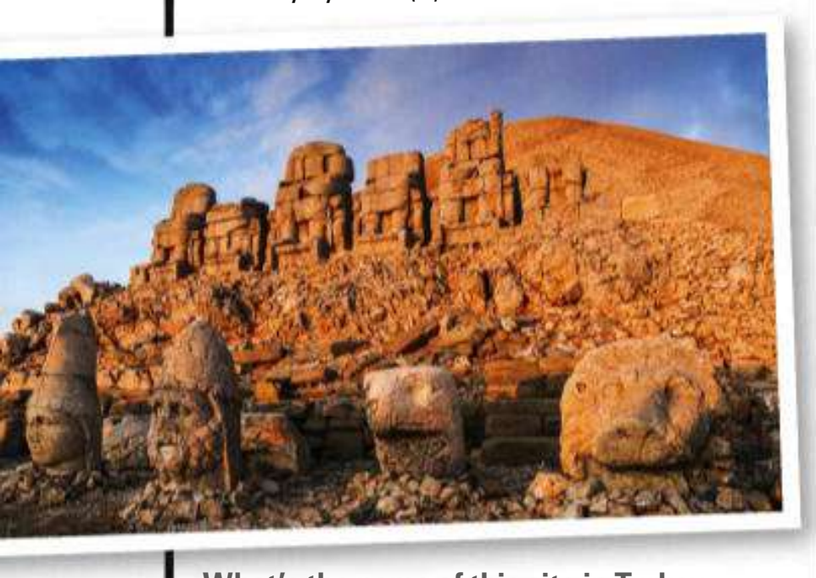
Across

5 One of the most influential communist leaders of the 20th century, whose name means "the Bringer of Light" (2,3,4)
8 The New ____ Army, formed in 1645, won the Civil War for the Parliamentarians (5)
10 Indian state that was under Portuguese control for more than four centuries until being annexed by India in the 1960s (3)
11 Protests at discrimination against African-Americans, and resistance to Apartheid in South Africa, are just two of the movements to secure these (5,6)
12 Ruler of Thebes in the Oedipus legend (5)
13 Barbara ____, 20th-century American Pulitzer prize-winning popular historian (7)
16 Surname of a much-romanticised English highwayman, hanged near York in 1739 (6)
17 The last of the wars between this people and the US army effectively ended with the surrender of Geronimo in 1886 (6)
21 King of the English who, in his short reign, took the Midlands and Northumbria from Norse rulers (6,1)
23 Country that joined with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic (1958–61) (5)
25 Maori chief whose opposition to the colonial government's purchase of tribal lands led to the first Taranaki War (1860–61) (6,5)
27 Abbreviated name of the elite British military force established in 1941, disbanded in 1945 and revived in 1947 (3)
28 A battle here in 1815 against the Prussians proved to be Napoleon's last victory, his next military engagement being Waterloo (5)
29 Temple-tomb surrounded by statues on its namesake mountain in south-east Turkey – a Unesco World Heritage Site (6,3)

Down

1 Emperor whose reign is noted for the last great persecution of Christians by the Romans in the early fourth century (10)
2 A term used in Buddhism for the ultimate objective of a follower, literally translated as "blowing out" or "becoming extinguished" (7)
3 A body of warriors formed under the Zulu military system (4)
4 Hampshire town with a castle built by King John in the early 1200s at a location halfway between Winchester and Windsor (6)
5 First name of a major French writer, leader of the Romantic movement, who went into political exile in 1851 (4)
6 First poet to be buried in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey (being honoured there as the clerk of the king's works) (7)
7 State-owned serfs of the Spartans, thought to be the region's original inhabitants (6)
9 Greek military leader, best known for his victory in the naval battle of Aegospotami in 405 BC (8)
14 Renaissance Polish astronomer whose heliocentric model of the universe marked a major advance in astronomy (10)
15 Anglo-Saxon king, father of Alfred the Great (alternative spelling) (9)
18 National Trust-owned Victorian mansion in Northumberland – the world's first house to be lit by hydro-electric power (8)
19 Arguably the greatest British writer of Victorian times, said to have invented the genre of "Christmas books" (7)
20 Large-scale natural disaster, typically generated by an earthquake, as was the one that swept across the Indian Ocean in 2004 (7)
22 Medieval toll levied to pay for the building and upkeep of town walls (6)
24 Morale-boosting wartime gesture associated with Winston Churchill (1,4)
26 Major civilisation of what's now southern Mexico, Guatemala and Belize. Its "classic period" lasted from around AD 250 to 900 (4)

Compiled by **Eddie James**



What's the name of this site in Turkey, believed to be a royal tomb? *(29 across)*

HOW TO ENTER

● Open to residents of the UK (& Channel Islands). Post entries to ***BBC History Magazine*, December 2021 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to ***december2021@historycomps.co.uk*** by 5pm on **24 November 2021**. ● Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the January 2022 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at *https://policies.immediate.co.uk/privacy* ● Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) would love to send you newsletters, together with special offers and other promotions. If you would not like to receive these, please write 'NO INFO' on your entry. ● Branded BBC titles are licensed from or published jointly with BBC Studios (the commercial arm of the BBC). Please tick here ❑ if you'd like to receive regular newsletters, special offers and promotions from BBC Studios by email. Your information will be handled in accordance with the BBC Studios privacy policy: *bbcstudios.com/privacy. – bbc.com/editorialguidelines/guidance/code-of-conduct*

Solution to our October 2021 crossword

Across 7 Aurelius 8 Ankara 10 Nefertiti 11 Arden 12 Alton 13 Royal Mail 15 Kaiser 17 Tedder 21 Witch hunt 23 Ripon 25 Koran 26 Gaitskell 27 Stopes 28 Sarajevo
Down 1 Arafat 2 Florence 3 Lumière 4 Antall 5 Raedwald 6 Caen 7 Anne Askew 9 Libya 14 Lord Nelson 16 Interpol 18 Etruscan 19 Purge 20 St Aidan 22 Henges 24 Peeler 25 Kush

Five winners of *What is History, Now?*
J Paxton-White, West Yorkshire; A Gilbert, Tyne and Wear; HJ Shute, Derbyshire; A Hudson, Cumbria; D Cutler, Wimborne

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Invaders, predators, barbarians – the Vikings are sometimes portrayed as one-dimensional warriors whose achievements include little more than plundering and raiding, but they were so much more. Join us for Vikings Week on HistoryExtra from 15–19 November as we explore the Viking Age, from the famous warlords and kings, to the lives of the "ordinary" Norse.
historyextra.com/vikings

The history behind *The North Water*

To accompany BBC drama *The North Water,* which is set against the backdrop of a 19th-century whaling vessel, Kate Jamieson examines the whaling industry and the risks that hunting these behemoths posed to sailors' lives.
historyextra.com/whaling-history

How much do you know about ancient Greece?

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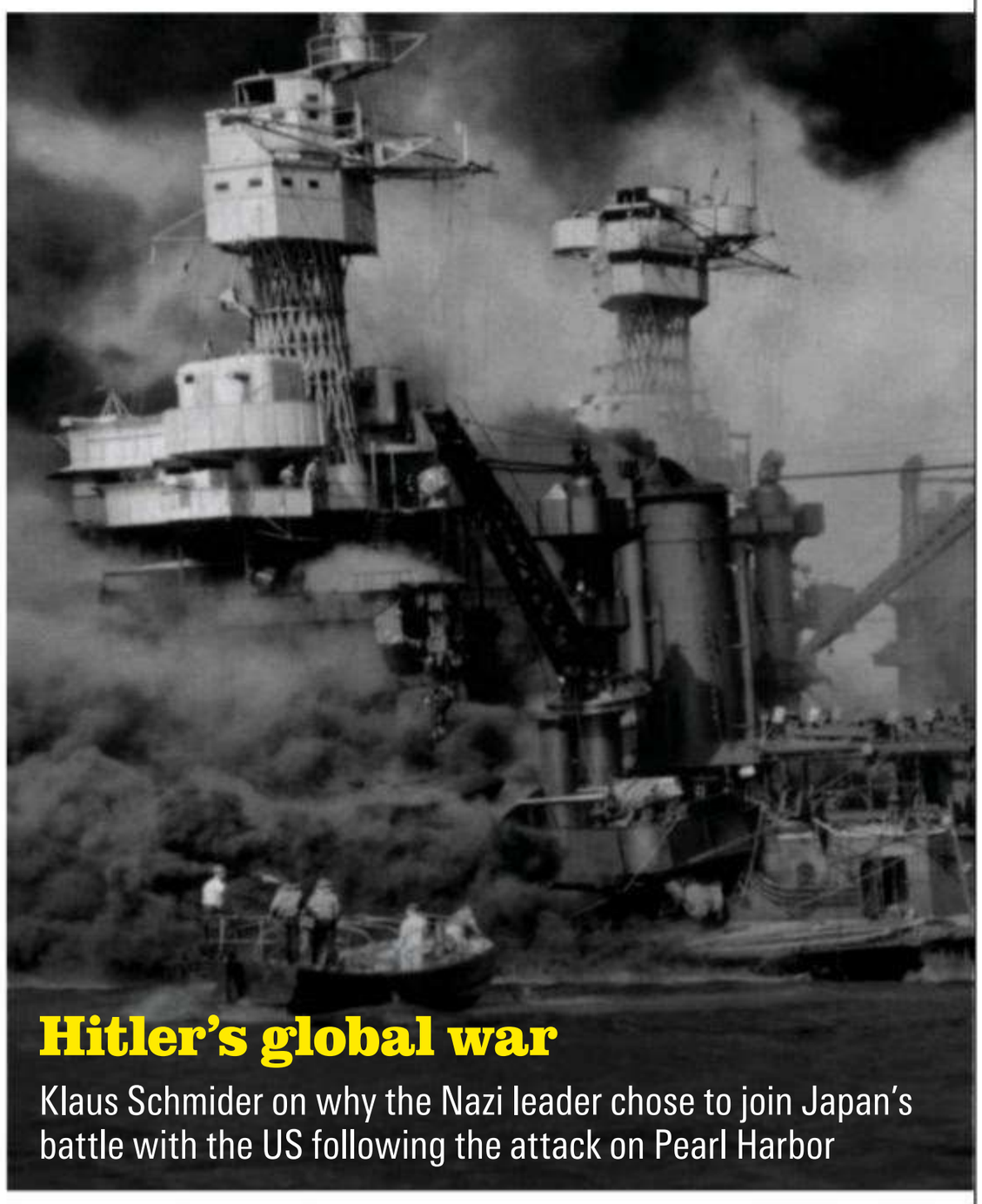

Hitler's global war

Klaus Schmider on why the Nazi leader chose to join Japan's battle with the US following the attack on Pearl Harbor

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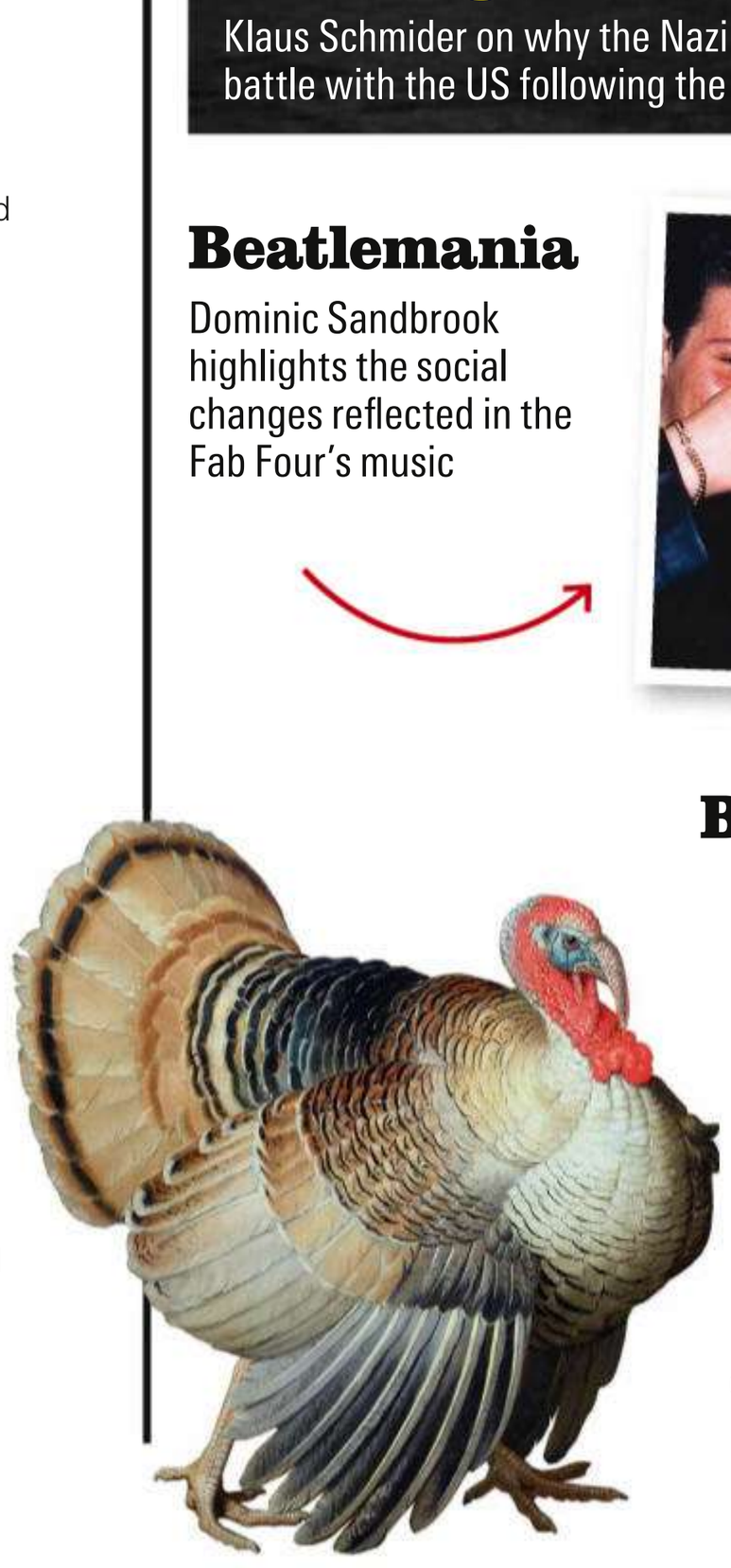
Dominic Sandbrook highlights the social changes reflected in the Fab Four's music



Books of the year

A selection of Britain's best-loved historians pick their favourite reads of 2021

Festive food

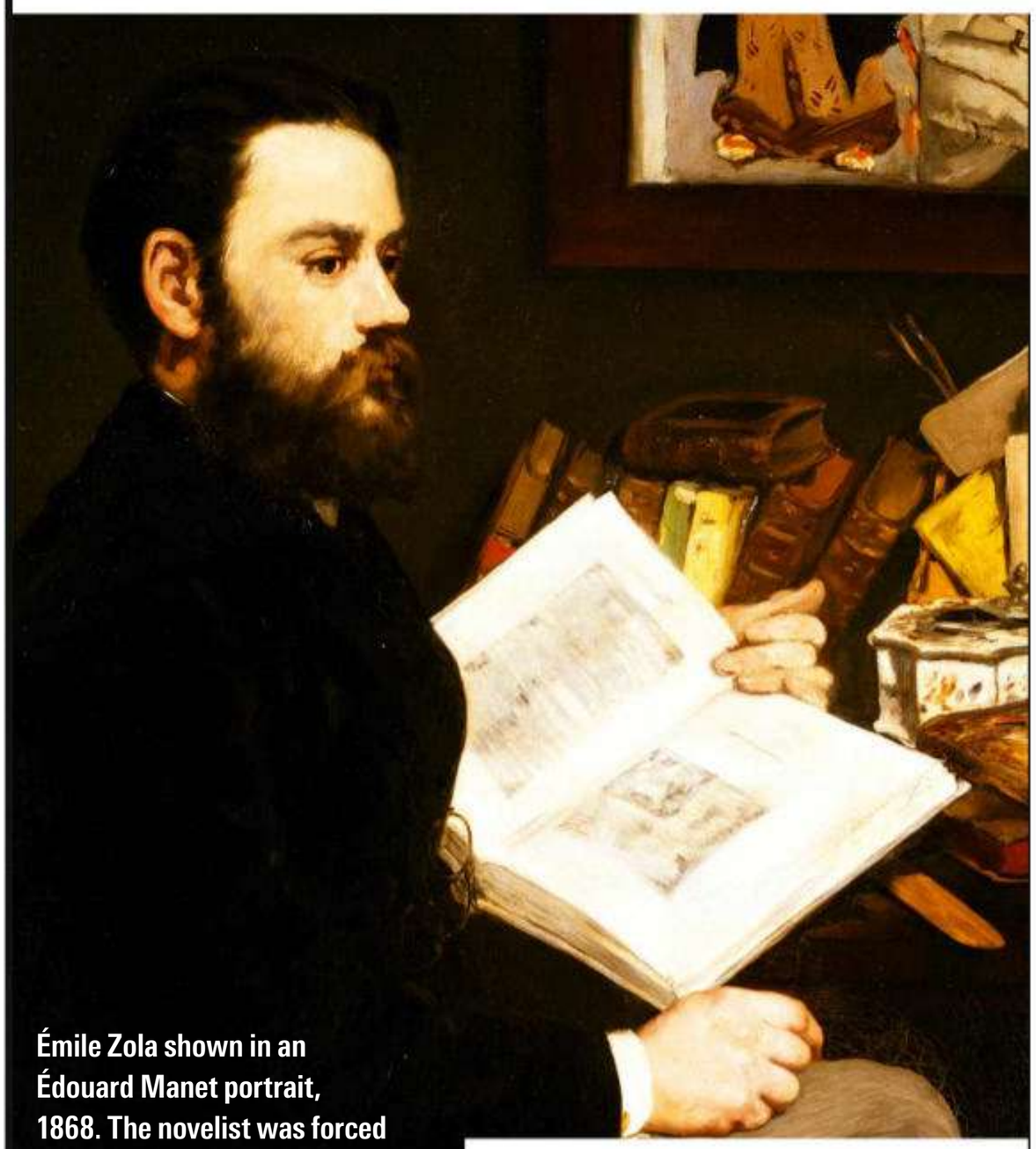
Annie Gray describes the contents of Christmas dinners in centuries past

MY HISTORY HERO

Children's author and broadcaster ***Michael Rosen*** *chooses*

Émile Zola

1840–1902



Émile Zola shown in an Édouard Manet portrait, 1868. The novelist was forced to flee to England following his very public declaration of support for Alfred Dreyfus

IN PROFILE

Émile Zola was a French novelist, playwright and journalist. He also played a key role in the exoneration of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer wrongly convicted of treason. Zola won acclaim for his 20-volume *Les Rougon-Macquart* series of novels about the history of a family during the reign of Napoleon III. He died in Paris, aged 62, from carbon monoxide poisoning, thought to have been caused by an improperly vented chimney.

Michael Rosen is a children's author, poet and broadcaster. His latest book is *Many Different Kinds of Love: A Story of Life, Death and the NHS* (Ebury, 2021)

When did you first hear about Zola? In my school sixth form, when we read short stories in French. I had a wonderful French teacher, who introduced us to Zola's *L'Attaque du Moulin*. One of the joys of studying a foreign language is the pleasure you get when you suddenly discover that you can read an adult story by a foreign writer in their own tongue. It's like discovering a new set of clothes that you never knew you had!

What kind of man was Zola? His family had Italian origins, so he felt rather despised as an outsider – at this time the French had a kind of racist word for people from the southern Mediterranean: "méteque". And I think it was this that made him so desperate to get France's highest award, the Legion of Honour. You get a sense of him thinking: "Aren't I the most popular writer in France – don't I deserve this?" He was also a man with a social conscience, advocating workers' control of industry.

What made him a hero? The stance he took during the Dreyfus Affair in the 1890s. At this moment of high crisis in France, Zola was a resolute supporter of Alfred Dreyfus, a French army officer of Jewish descent who was imprisoned on Devil's Island after being wrongly convicted of treason. The affair split France down the middle and a lot of French people proudly called themselves anti-Semites – newspapers even carried the words "the anti-Semitic newspaper" on their mastheads.

What was Zola's finest hour? The famous "J'Accuse" letter he wrote – published on the front page of a prominent Paris newspaper in 1898 – in which he accused the French army and government of obstruction of justice and anti-Semitism. Doing so endangered his career, and indeed his life. Zola exposed the conspiracy between the government and the military, incurring the wrath of many powerful people. He was found guilty of libel, removed from the Legion of Honour, and forced to flee to England, staying in London for nearly a year (where, incidentally, he was appalled by the food). In the end, he returned to France and was pardoned after it emerged that Dreyfus was indeed innocent.

Is there anything that you don't particularly admire about him? Some might see him as a bigamist because he was in effect married to two women: his wife and his mistress, the mother of his children. But the trio tried to resolve an irresolvable situation in a modern way.

What would you ask Zola if you could meet him? I'd ask him if he was really prepared to go to prison over his J'Accuse letter.

Michael Rosen was talking to York Membery

> "By accusing the French army and government of obstruction of justice and anti-Semitism, Zola endangered his career, and indeed his life"

LISTEN

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